Iain Sinclair
Lud Heat and
Suicide Bridge
INTRODUCTION BY MICHAEL MOORCOCK
'A wonderful poem' Peter Ackroyd

Eight churches give us the enclosure, the shape of the fear; built for early century optimism, erected over a fen of undisclosed horrors, white stones laid upon the mud and dust...

Lud Heat, a great fusion of prose and verse, is an exploration of a contemporary city and the historical and mythical patterns that it hides. The churches of Nicholas Hawksmoor, built to a strange plan in a London ravaged by fire and plague, are the sites of mystery and energy that animate this masterpiece of postwar English literature.

This edition also includes Sinclair's remarkable series of texts on the mythology of myth and place, *Suicide Bridge*.

'*Lud Heat* combines researches into the sinister dotted lines which link up the Hawksmoor churches of East London - complete with a very fine diagram displaying the pentacles and triangulations which connect churches to plague pits to the sites of the notorious Whitechapel and Ratclyffe Highway murders - with a broken sequence of breathtakingly lovely modern free-verse lyrics'
Jenny Turner, *London Review of Books*

'Dark, dense and learned...Sinclair means his dark stuff and makes it moving'
Karl Miller

VINTAGE

ISBN 0-09-958911-7

9 780099 589112

UK £5.99 CANADA $12.00
AUS $12.95* *recommended price

Fiction/Poetry

Cover photograph:
Marc Atkins

VINTAGE U.K.

LUD HEAT
SUICIDE BRIDGE

Iain Sinclair has been a rare-book dealer, parks gardener, and all-purposes labourer across East London. In the 1970s he ran Albion Village Press, publishing Brian Catling and Chris Torrance, as well as several volumes of his own poetry. More recently he has written a number of television films, including *The Cardinal and the Corpse*, made with Christopher Petit for Channel 4. His essays have appeared in the *London Review of Books*, *Sight and Sound* and *Modern Painters*.

His novel *Downriver* won the 1992 Encore Award for the year's best second novel and also the James Tait Black Memorial Prize.

Published by Vintage *1995*

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Copyright © Ian Sinclair 1975, 1979
Introduction copyright © Michael Moorcock 1995
Maps copyright © Dave McKean 1995
From original drawings by Brian Catling

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser

Some of the poems in *Lud Heat*, or earlier versions of these poems, have first appeared in: *The Poetry Review*; *The Human Handkerchief* No. 5; *Great Works* 4; *The Curiously Strong* (Final Issue)

Many of the texts in *Suicide Bridge*, or earlier versions of those texts, were originally published in the following magazines or collections: *New Directions* (10 English Poets; ed. Andrew Crozier); *Anthologie de la Nouvelle Poesie Anglaise* (ed. Paul Buck, Pierre Joris); *bal:le:d curtains; Grosseteste Review; Great Works; Meantime; Montemora; Ochre; Perfect Bound; Pod; Saturday Morning; The Human Handkerchief*

Lud Heat was first published in Great Britain by Albion Village Press, 1975
Second edition published by The Lewis-Graham Press, 1986
Third edition published by Goldmark, 1987
Suicide Bridge was first published in Great Britain by Albion Village Press, 1979

Vintage
Random House, 20 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London SW1V 2SA

Random House Australia (Pty) Limited
20 Alfred Street, Milsons Point, Sydney
New South Wales 2061, Australia

Random House New Zealand Limited
18 Poland Road, Glenfield
Auckland 10, New Zealand

Random House South Africa (Pty) Limited
PO Box 337, Bergvlei, South Africa

Random House UK Ltd Reg. No. 954009

A CIP catalogue record for this book
is available from the British Library

ISBN 0 09 958911 7

Papers used by Random House UK Ltd are natural, recyclable products made from wood grown in sustainable forests. The manufacturing processes conform to the environmental regulations of the country of origin

Typeset by Deltatype Ltd, Ellesmere Port, Cheshire

Printed and bound in Great Britain by The Guernsey Press Co. Ltd., Guernsey, Channel Islands

Iain Sinclair

LUD HEAT

With an introduction by Michael Moorcock
and maps by Dave McKean

SUICIDE BRIDGE

VINTAGE

BY IAIN SINCLAIR

Fiction

White Chappell, Scarlet Tracings
Downriver
Radon Daughters

Documentary

The Kodak Mantra Diaries
(Allen Ginsberg in London)

Poetry

Back Garden Poems
Muscat's Würm
The Birth Rug
Lud Heat
Suicide Bridge
Flesh Eggs & Scalp Metal: Selected Poetry
Jack Elam's Other Eye

LUD HEAT

A Book of Dead Hamlets
May 1974 to April 1975

INTRODUCTION

NO MERE PASQUINADER, Iain Sinclair, larking, drags from London's amniotic silt the trove of centuries and presents it to us, still dripping, still stinking, still caked and frequently still defiantly kicking. In a series of ever more ambitious raree shows, ring-mastered with a mixture of relish and horror, with sly Celtic magic, with almost supernatural control, he has established himself as London's most original celebrant and one of her great creative voices. Peter Ackroyd, another subtle London visionary who has much in common with Sinclair, enthusiastically points to *Lud Heat* as an inspirer of his time-travelling *Hawksmoor*. Sinclair always leads my own imagination back to its true territory.

At its best London fiction has, in the past twenty years, become characteristically a visionary medium. In contrast to the rational, neatly written disappointments of Old Sir Kingsley, we have a Gilrayish Young Martin, as unEnlightened as they come, sifting the Sunday morning Portobello gutters for revelations and gagging like Swift. We have the unfortunate Rushdie, not quite suffering almost the noblest fate of any visionary, and Fay Weldon and, these days, even A. S. Byatt. To those of us who have been exploring the territory for some time, it looked like everyone started knocking back the laudanum and investigating the paranormal pretty much as soon as a handy tourist trail had been blazed to the high ground where angels live. Territory penetrated and mapped long-since by Sinclair and other extra-mural romantics like Angela Carter, Philip K. Dick

and J. G. Ballard in largely unpublicised expeditions since the mid-1960s.

It could be argued that the Occult has in the nick of time come to the aid of a threatened Orthodoxy. Talismans and omens are eagerly snapped up by a technologically challenged middle class. Some days, any old bone will do. Little visionary peels are slipped into Professor Lodge's jellies. The modern English novel contains almost as many ghosts and visitations as a Radcliffe three-decker. Spontaneous combustion should soon become an acceptable literary convention. A larger measure of supernatural melodrama is allowed to English domestic fiction than at any time since *Northanger Abbey* put a welcome lid on the Gothic's groaning trick coffin. Fifty-year-old notions of pulp SF writers become novel and exciting elements to spice the traditional mix. No wonder all these people are obsessed with vampires and rejuvenation formulae.

Most of the recycling undertaken by English fiction's best-known careerists is about as effective as a Hampstead green bin in evading the inevitability of decay and death or even disguising that familiar, rather unpleasant sweetish smell. A bit of genre-borrowing isn't really the same thing as owning an original vision, but at least those grave-robbers and wine-waterers, those croppers and *colons*, helped produce the climactic shift which now allows a writer as original as Iain Sinclair to find the larger audience he has deserved for years.

He started showing up in high-street bookshops with a tangle of bombsite brambles and gaudy fireweed, the contents of long-buried basements, the muttering bones and whispering rags of his book-dealer's trawls through a city largely unexplored by her own inhabitants and thus insufficiently respected or feared, which he called *White Chappell, Scarlet Tracings*. He followed this with a structurally more sophisticated *Downriver* and then gave his widening readership *Radon Daughters* as glorious proof of his ever-increasing powers. A manipulative Harlequin slipping through the alleys and twitterns between one world and another, one supernatural realm and another, one age and another, weaving what at close perspective sometimes seems

a chaotic course. Sinclair is an authentic visionary. Only at the end of a book, however, do we realise we've also been in the power of a genuine wizard, someone capable of tracing patterns and designs only barely perceptible to most people and, more to the point, able to reveal them to us.

Iain Sinclair's rich enthusiasms, his relish for the idiosyncratic, the original and profoundly grotesque gives his work a certain Dickensian flavour, but Sinclair's never as desperate as Dickens to discover hope. His literary heroes are Hodgson, Burroughs, the beats, the best pulp writers – all people madly in love with their own powers of language, their own massive turbulences, their own impossible paradoxes, their own perceptions of non-linear Time, of coexistent past, present and future, forever seeking to communicate the ecstasy of their unguarded souls to an average reader who has come to look to books for consolation, not inspiration.

Sinclair works as a revenant, a publicist, an archivist of the marginal, the unfashionable and the self-doomed, against the general tenor of Eng. lit. power politics whose vested interests permit no real assault on the status quo, where the established canon is forcefully promoted because lazy convention also acts to employ academics, critics and literary editors at good wages for small effort. The old catholics like Walter Raleigh or Quiller-Couch, who founded our English schools, were soon replaced in the early 20th century by ambitious puritans, low Tories or worse.

It's against a tide hazardous with rotting driftwood, snapping predators and the not-quite-dead, queer lights reflecting from his benign dome, his terrifying glasses, that Sinclair poles his stately punt. He has a book-dealer's eye for obscurity and rarity, a way of spotting something which, until he fishes it out and polishes it up a bit, we hadn't ourselves noticed among the ordinary, the disgusting or even alarming flotsam of London's endless flux. Sinclair's people are no more bizarre or grotesque than most real people. That is to say, they are often, like Dickens's, larger than fiction, but in no way larger than life. Sinclair celebrates what is idiosyncratic in men and women, yet no character is stranger

or more quirkily obsessed than half the people you'd meet on a long train trip. You always leave Sinclair, as you leave Rembrandt or Hals, looking at the familiar world with freshly informed eyes.

Sinclair's relish for language, for lost words and forgotten notions, his lust for metaphor, links him with earlier London visionaries like Blake or Eliot, just as the breadth of his enthusiasms allows the inspiration of Ginsberg and De Quincey, but it's neither his eclecticism nor his influences which define his work – it's his curiosity, his sense of justice, his bardic instincts, his generosity, and above all his original vision of what remains in spite of everything the greatest and most complex of all cities. He proves to us why London is still the best and most rewarding place for a poet or a novelist to live.

He proves it through celebrations like this.

Michael Moorcock, Lost Pines, Texas
April 1995

This book is for Joe, Arthur, Bill and the others
who are in there for the duration

This done, and after these things had been somewhat digested by Christiana and her company, the Interpreter takes them apart again, and has them first into a room where was a man that could look no way but downwards, with a muck-rake in his hand. There stood also one over his head, with a celestial crown in his hand, and proffered him that crown for his muck-rake; but the man did neither look up, nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, and dust of the floor.

Then said Christiana, I persuade myself that I know somewhat the meaning of this; for this is a figure of a man of this world; is it not, good Sir?

INTER. Thou has said the right, said he, and his muck-rake doth show his carnal mind. And whereas thou seest him rather give heed to rake up straws and sticks, and the dust of the floor, than to what he says that calls to him from above with the celestial crown in his hand, it is to show that heaven is but a fable to some, and that things here are counted the only things substantial. Now, whereas it was also showed thee, that the man could look no way but downwards, it is to let thee know that earthly things, when they are with power upon men's minds, quite carry their hearts away from God.

CHRIS. Then said Christiana, Oh, deliver me from this muck-rake.

John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*

BOOK ONE

THE MUCK RAKE

NICHOLAS HAWKSMOOR, HIS CHURCHES

'All perils, specially malignant, are recurrent'
Thomas De Quincey, *On Murder Considered As One Of The Fine Arts*

'The living can assist the imagination of the dead'
W. B. Yeats, *A Vision*

THE OLD MAPS present a skyline dominated by church towers; those horizons were differently punctured, so that the subservience of the grounded eye, and the division of the city by parish, was not disguised. Moving now on an eastern arc the churches of Nicholas Hawksmoor soon invade the consciousness, the charting instinct. Eight churches give us the enclosure, the shape of the fear; – built for early century optimism, erected over a fen of undisclosed horrors, white stones laid upon the mud and dust. In this air certain hungers were activated that have yet to be pacified; no turning back, as Yeats claims: 'the stones once set up traffic with the enemy.'

The Act of Parliament of 1711 provided taxes for the acquisition of sites, burial grounds, and parsonages. There was the rounded notion of 50 churches – but when the Commission for the Building of the New Churches discharged the Surveyors, Hawksmoor and John James, in 1733, only a dozen had been completed. Six [St Alfege, Greenwich/St Anne, Limehouse/St George-in-the-East/ Christ Church, Spitalfields/St George, Bloomsbury/St Mary

Woolnoth], were wholly Hawksmoor's; he was also responsible for the obelisks at St Luke, Old Street, and St John, Horselydown. He was the force behind the operation, the planning was in his hands. So that what we are talking about is not accident.

Hawksmoor the Surveyor examined and selected the sites, walked over the ground, drew up the plans, made wooden models, rapidly turned out a sequence of sketches, possible structures to contain some portion of his amazing polygot energies. He had that frenzy, the Coleridge notebook speed, to rewrite the city: man, recognising some distillation of his most private urges in the historical present, is suddenly, and more than anybody around him, *there* – had more to say than the 8 churches could use. So there are sketches cancelling sketches – and the churches themselves are incredible culture grafts, risky quotations studded into a central and repeated image of strength, key symbols that remain secret. The Commission required 'one general design or forme.' Hawksmoor worked to this, worked between the poles of Wren and Vanbrugh. Wren (practical) and Vanbrugh (extravagant) demanding that 'a Temple . . . should ever have the most Solemn and Awfull Appearance both without and within.' Vanbrugh and the Commission condemned the practice of burial near the church – this, Hawksmoor ignored. He had his vision of the whole and he described it in a letter to Dr George Clarke:

'we have noe City, nor Streets, nor Houses, but a Chaos of Dirty Rotten Sheds, allways tumbling or taking fire, with winding Crooked passages (scarse practicable) Lakes of Mud & Rills of Stinking Mire Running through them . . . They had so favourable an opportunity to Rebuild London ye most August Towne in ye world, & either have Keept it to its old Dimention, or if it was reasonable to let it swell to a Larger, they ought for ye Publick good to have Guided it into a Regular & commodious form, & not have suffered it to Run into an ugly inconvenient self destroying unweildly Monster.'

The geometry of opposition was staked out, the work begun. We must examine the detail.

A triangle is formed between Christ Church, St George-in-the-East and St Anne, Limehouse. These are centres of power for those territories; sentinel, sphinx-form, slack dynamos abandoned as the culture they supported goes into retreat. The power remains latent, the frustration mounts on a current of animal magnetism, and victims are still claimed.

St George, Bloomsbury, and St Alfege, Greenwich, make up the major pentacle-star. The five card is reversed, beggars in snow pass under the lit church window; the judgement is 'disorder, chaos, ruin, discord, profligacy.' These churches guard or mark, rest upon, two major sources of occult power: The British Museum and Greenwich Observatory. The locked cellar of words, the labyrinth of all recorded knowledge, the repository of stolen fires and symbols, excavated god-forms – and measurement, star-knowledge, time calculations, Maze Hill, the bank of light that faces the Isle of Dogs. So many spectres operate along these fringes: Yeats in the British Museum, at the time of the Ripper murders, researching into Blake (Blake and Newton, polar opposites). Milton: his early-morning walks over the ground where St George was to be built. The only Hawksmoor church that could not be properly orientated.

Then there is the sub-system of fire obelisks: St Luke, Old Street, and St John, Horselydown. They form an equilateral triangle, raised over the water, with London's true obelisk – 'Cleopatra's Needle,' which is, of course, the obelisk set up by Thothmes III in front of the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis.

St Luke's obelisk (the church itself is decayed, the roof gone) stands over Bunhill Fields, plague pit, burial place of William Blake, Daniel Defoe, John Bunyan. Plague-year excavations discovering the antiquity of this site as a field of inhumation: pre-Roman. Defoe writes of it: 'I have heard that in a great pit in Finsbury . . . many who were infected

and near their end, and delirious also, ran wrapped in blankets or rags and threw themselves in and expired there, before any earth could be thrown upon them.' Milton died here, in his house at 125 Bunhill Row, 'with so little pain or emotion, that the tide of his expiring was not perceived by those in the room.' A sequence of heated incisions through the membranous time-layer.

Standing there, on a walk along the whole chain of Hawksmoor churches, we notice five minor obelisks in the fenced area beyond Blake's burial slab. The Old Street obelisk is aligned beyond the boundary wall: the point of force is discovered. We also come across a lichen diagram, the quadrivium, recognised later in that walk, the conflux of 4 roads beyond St George-in-the-East, the place where the staked corpse of the Ratcliffe Highway killer was buried. This would relate to the labyrinth plans of the heart-shrine, the innermost sanctuary, that were scratched on the rock face outside the Palaeolithic Cave.

St John, Horselydown, lies to the south of Tower Bridge, in the bent elbow of Druid Street, across the water from Tower Hill, burial place of the immortal head of Bran. It is destroyed, a rim of old bricks upon which an office-block has been erected. The obelisk is gone, though we can still walk directly out of Druid Street into Crucifix Lane and down St Thomas Street to the preserved surgical tower, known to John Keats and Sir William Gull.

We can mark out the total plan of churches on the map and sift the meanings. We can produce the symbol of Set, instrument of castration or tool for making cuneiform signs. To maim or to mark. The shaman is eunuch.

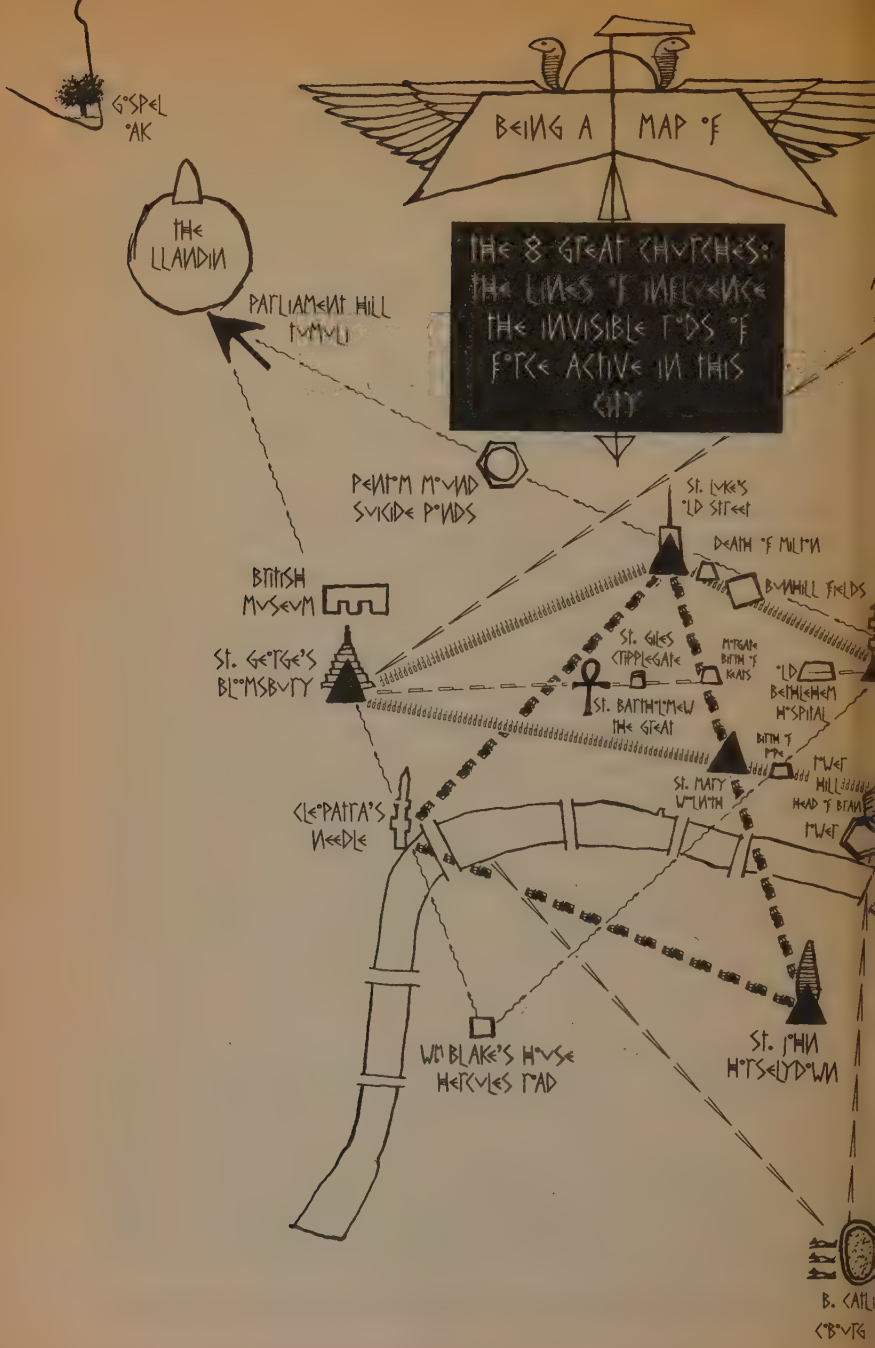
The scenographic view is too complex to unravel here, the information too dense; we can only touch on a fraction of the possible relations. The Tower is obviously central, a fixed point. The lesser vertebrae support the wings of the beast. The web is printed on the city and disguised with

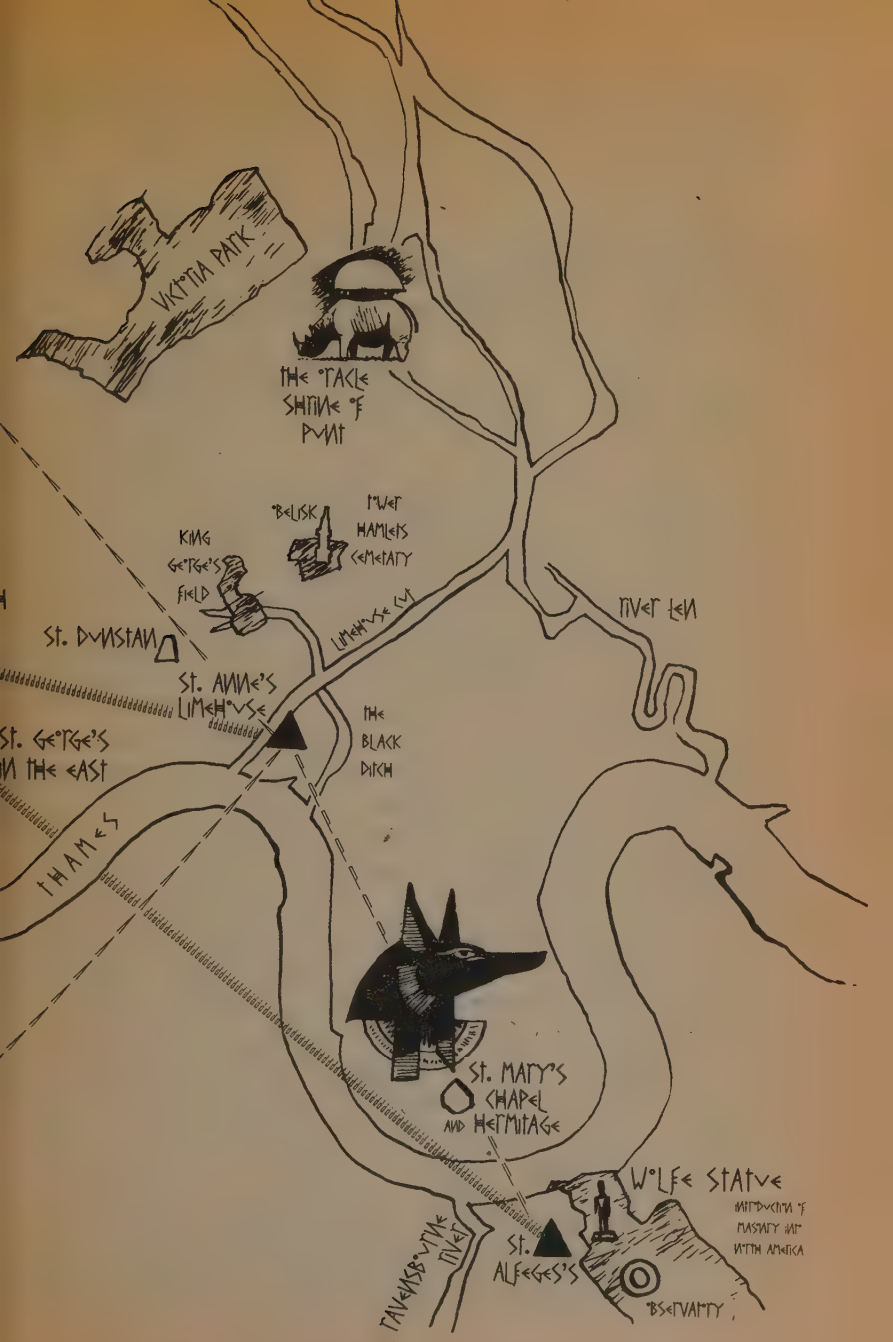
multiple superimpositions. We can still follow one direct line of escape: Christ Church – Bunhill Fields – St Luke – the Penton Mound and Suicide Ponds – Parliament Hill. The returning arrow is equally interesting: St George, Bloomsbury – Cleopatra's Needle – Blake's Lambeth. And the connecting rod, the straight line from Hercules Road to Christ Church passes, of course, through St Mary Woolnoth, Hawksmoor's pulpit of slave sermons, attacks on the blood trade. Christ Church is in alignment with St George-in-the-East and St Alfege. St George-in-the-East and St Luke are equidistant from Christ Church, etc., – This is another whole work. It is enough to sketch the possibilities.

From what is known of Hawksmoor it is possible to imagine that he did work a code into the buildings, knowingly or unknowingly, templates of meaning, bands of continuing ritual. The building should be a Temple, an active place, a high metaphor. The buildings taken together, knotted across the city, yield a further word. Hawksmoor's obituary tells us that 'he was a very skilful Mathematician, Geographer and Geometrician . . . perfectly skill'd in the History of Architecture, and could give an exact Account of all the famous Buildings, both Ancient and Modern, in every part of the World.' He worked, quietly, to a position of public influence: Deputy Surveyor at Winchester, with Wren at Greenwich, college commissions at Oxford, the mausoleum park and pyramid complex at Castle Howard. Died of 'gout in the stomach.' His motives remain opaque; his churches are the mediums, filled with the dust of wooden voices.

The plans for the unrealised 'Basilica After the Primitive Christians' give us a glimpse at the ambition of Hawksmoor's London operation. This was his ideal or archetype. It was to be laid out to the east of Brick Lane, alongside Hare Marsh, where the Kray brothers' pub, the Carpenter's Arms, now stands. He wanted a 'Septum or Enclosure . . . to keep off filth Nastyness and Brutes.' This hope is also unrealised.

The churches are only one system of energies, or unit of


BEING A MAP OF
THE 8 GREAT CHURCHES:
THE LINES OF INFLUENCE
THE INVISIBLE FIDS OF
FORCE ACTIVE IN THIS
CITY
THE LLANDIN
PARLIAMENT HILL
TUMULI
PENTON MOUND
SUICIDE PONDS
ST. LUKE'S
OLD STREET
DEATH OF MILTON
BUNHILL FIELDS
BRITISH
MUSEUM
ST. GEORGE'S
BLOOMSBURY
ST. GILES
CRIPPLEGATE
MYRIAD
BIRTH OF
KEATS
OLD
BETHLEHEM
HOSPITAL
ST. BARTHOLOMEW
THE GREAT
BIRTH OF
BLAKE
MUSE
HILL
HEAD OF BRAN
MUSE
ST. MARY
WOOLNOTH
CLEOPATRA'S
NEEDLE
WM BLAKE'S HOUSE
HERCULES ROAD
ST. JOHN
HOTSEYDOWN
B. CATH
CROSS


VICTORIA PARK
THE OAKLEY SHRINE OF PAN
OBELISK
KING GEORGE'S FIELD
ST. DUNSTAN
ST. ANNE'S LIMEHOUSE
THE BLACK DITCH
ST. GEORGE'S IN THE EAST
THAMES
RIVER LEA
ST. MARY'S CHAPEL AND HERMITAGE
WOLFE STATUE
ST. ALFEGES'S
OBSERVATORY

connection, within the city; the old hospitals, the Inns of Court, the markets, the prisons, the religious houses are the others. They have their disciples, aware of the older relations.

Each church is an enclosure of force, a trap, a sight-block, a raised place with an unacknowledged influence over events created within the shadow-lines of their towers.

Certain features are in common: extravagant design, massive, almost slave-built, strength – not democratic. A strength that is not connected to notions of 'craftsmanship' or 'elegance'. They are not easy on the eye, and do not enforce images of grace. Metaphors inflate at their own risk. The mind is not led upwards to any starry nest. These buildings do not hide and yet are not much in the consciousness or conversations of present parishioners – it is there, but you have to dig for it. There is no Chartres or Salisbury feel, with the church as the excuse for everything else. It shocks every time you glimpse one of the towers. They are shunned. Their strength is hybrid, awkward: an admix of Egyptian and Greek source matter – curiosities discovered in engraved library plates. Necropolis Culture. Behemoths from the Zoo of Abortions. Botched Sphinx experiments. The Great Mausoleum at Halicarnassus is re-enacted in Bloomsbury. You can see it in the background of Hogarth's 'Gin Lane.' And this is appropriate. The east London churches still draw the meths-men and derelicts, fire-alcohol devotees, to the attendant parks. The mendicants have escaped from the Five of Pentacles. They rest on gravestones and benches. This is almost medieval. They are waiting, hanging around, debating; ferocious solitary monologues – in the clutch of root instincts. It is the opening shot of a lepers' pilgrimage. Hard charity is expected. Scourges and soup-kitchens. Sanctuary. The church not altogether benevolent, but seducing these terminal optimists into some tall parental grasp. British White Wine bottles smash against the numbered steps: the broken fragments of brown glass are part of the design. The

walls are varnished with urine. They study and inscribe the graffiti with prophetic seriousness.

There is a further possible reading to the vagrant invasion of these vestry-protected lands – that they have come to consult the oracle that can no longer be discovered, made their cross-country journeys by well-worn migration tracks, to extinguish ego in the bladed flame; that they have been prematurely released, by catastrophe and shock, from the incubation cubicles beneath the church – half resolved dream victims, half cured – they babble of the vision which they carry as identity.

My own jobs follow the churches across the city. Cigar-packing in Clerkenwell and I cycle past St Luke, the obelisk to my right, Bunhill Fields to my left. Ullage cellars of Truman's Brewery, Brick Lane, and I front Christ Church. Garden assistant, and grass manicurist in Limehouse and I mow continually between the shifting influence of St George and St Anne.

I spoke of the unacknowledged magnetism and control-power, built-in code force, of these places; I would now specify . . . the ritual slaying of Marie Jeanette Kelly in the ground floor room of Miller's Court, Dorset Street, directly opposite Christ Church . . . the Ratcliffe Highway slaughter of 1811, with the supposed murderer, stake through heart, trampled into the pit where four roads cross to the north of St George-in-the-East . . . the battering to death of Mr Abraham Cohen, summer 1974, on Cannon Street Road (one spoke of the quadrivium): £110,000 in old banknotes in the kiosk behind him, stuffed in cocoa tins and cigarette packets; three ritualistic coins laid at his feet, as they were in 1888 at the feet of Mary Ann Nicholls, the first Ripper victim.

Each of these events deserves more detailed consideration than fits with this brief and nervy synopsis. The whole karmic programme of Whitechapel in 1888 moves around

the fixed point of Christ Church, that Tower of the Winds: from the east in – closer and closer – until the risk of the final act is achieved. Purgation/completion: performed in the decay of a pseudo-crypt.

We cannot leave Christ Church without mentioning the curious detail of the windows (which is echoed in the street-facing wall of Truman's Brewery, Brick Lane) – the pull that is set up by the sequence of small circular portholes above tall narrow lower windows. This is the symbol that was at the heart of Edvard Munch's iconography – and relates to a whole chain of meanings and resonances: the grail cup above the lance . . . the cauldron and the sword . . . female and male . . . the setting sun and the molten light over the waters . . . the pill about to be dropped into the test-tube . . . stylisation of the phallus and generative spurt. Volatile, active: demanding the leap of energies . . . repeated symbols of non-consummation . . . invitation. Kerry Downs thinks of the portholes as tunnels into the masonry, locking us deeper into the shape of the building. Hawksmoor discovered a translatable version of this in the 12th-century English towers at Exeter, Norwich and Ely.

If Christ Church was magnet to the archetypal murder myth of the late 19th century, St George-in-the-East was host to the definitive fear-prose of the early century: 'a work more lasting than brass . . . the most superb of the century by many degrees . . . the sublimest and most entire in their excellence that ever were committed,' as De Quincey claimed in his celebrated postscript to *On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts.* The Ratcliffe Highway murders.

De Quincey in his best Paramount purple sketches the 'local scene': 'Ratcliffe Highway is a public thoroughfare in a most chaotic quarter of eastern or nautical London . . . manifold ruffianism shrouded impenetrably under the mixed hats and turbans of men whose past was untraceable to any European eye . . . Lascars, Chinese, Moors, Negroes . . .' But there

is no mention of the church motor, even though much of the responsibility in seeking out the criminal lay with St George's Vestry. The essay, a brilliant narrative of high journalism and spine-tickling, was obviously assembled at a distance, by purely psychic connection. It did not grow from direct observation of the ground – so that the major visual clue was missed.

The affair is treated as a straight-forward scenario of brute force, pre-Dostoevsky; the in-cold-blood entry of domestic enclosures and the massacre of all innocents found within. Two groups destroyed, the Marrs and the Williamsons. The Marrs living on ground that Hawksmoor had attempted to persuade the Commission to buy, so that he could extend St George's frontage. But De Quincey, at his speed and exhaustion of operation, fending off the monkey, digressing obsessively towards overlapping versions of the truth, couldn't help getting in among the authentic sub-strata. Unconsciously he offers hieroglyphs, disguised and smudged Egyptian ritual detail. 'To one invariable type all the murders . . . conformed: the skull was first shattered; this step secured the murderer from instant retaliation; and, then, by way of locking up all into eternal silence, uniformly the throat was cut.' No rationale for this second act. The precise observance that was favoured in Whitechapel. The windpipe severed, the throat cut with the same left-handed stroke. The butchery was formal. Hieratic imposing on demotic. The guided hand. Suspicion of all doctors, quacks, barbers, slaughtermen.

This is made even clearer in De Quincey's description of the death of the Marr baby. There was, of course, no logical reason for killing a creature who could make no coherent witness; but the murderer seems to have been pushed into a wheel of frenzy, forced towards pre-sculptural image-making.

'. . . *The next ominous sign was, that the hood of the cradle had been smashed to pieces. It became evident that the*

wretch had found himself doubly embarrassed – first, by the arched hood, at the head of the cradle which accordingly he had beat into a ruin with his mallet, and secondly, by the gathering of the blankets and pillows about the baby's head. The free play of his blows had thus been baffled. And he had therefore finished the scene by applying his razor to the throat of the little innocent; after which, with no apparent purpose, as though he had become confused by the spectacle of his own atrocities, he had busied himself in piling the clothes elaborately over the child's corpse.'

Then there are the clues in the word selection, similes, chosen at speed, against time, the random adjectives . . . 'most insinuating and snaky refinement' . . . 'has energy enough to jump up again, like a pyramid of fire, and soar high above ruin many times repeated' . . . 'a dexterous movement of his left hand' . . . 'to notice the absolute certainty with which the silent hieroglyphics of the case betray to us the whole process and movements of the bloody drama.'

Finally there is the murderer's hair:

'. . . the most extraordinary and vivid colour, viz., bright yellow, and something between an orange and a lemon colour. Williams had been in India; chiefly in Bengal and Madras; but he had also been upon the Indus. Now, it is notorious that, in the Punjab, horses of a high caste are often painted – crimson, blue, green, purple; and it struck me that Williams might, for some casual purpose of disguise, have taken a hint from this practice of Scande and Lahore . . .'

The hint may have been taken, but not for any 'casual purpose of disguise.' It is the imprecise itch of ritual observance coming through again.

It was a time of confusion and chaos, as in 1888, tangled motives, half-delivered impulses. Nobody, guilty or innocent, seems to have quite known what they were doing. The

transcripts of the witnesses are full of cancelled stories, lies, wrong dates, infinitely adjustable times. The possible assassins were many – a whole cross-section of villains were activated – and it is impossible to say who actually struck the blows and who were ready to do it. The pattern of arrest, statement, release, allowed many obscure fringe figures to escape the net. There was for example, Cahill (Ka-Hill) who was found and brought back from Marlborough, where he had, for no reason that he could articulate, wandered to the edges of Avebury and Silbury Hill.

The mass hostility to the corpse of Williams was of a unified beast ferocity. The entire population of the district rose with the aim of destroying him, dismembering him and working every savagery upon his dead flesh. But the violence was formalised, a ritual was invented. A solemn procession from St George where the body had been kept overnight, a loop was made through the district, that all might see . . . past the Pear Tree where Williams had lodged . . . the Williamson's pub . . . the Marr's Ratcliffe Highway shop . . . St George . . . to the place of burial. The cart that carried the body had been specially prepared with murder weapons, maul and chisel, exhibited, as well as the stake. De Quincey does not talk much about this, mentioning only that after Williams hanged himself . . . 'he was buried in the centre of a quadrivium, or conflux of four roads (in this case four streets), with a stake driven through his heart. And over him drives for ever the uproar of unresting London.'

The year was 1812, the church very nearly one hundred years old, Blake writing *Jerusalem* . . .

'And every Act a Crime, and Albion the punisher & judge . . .
. . . He hath compell'd Albion to become a Punisher . . .
. . . London is a stone of her ruins . . .
. . . the murder'd bodies of her little ones . . .
. . . What shall I do? what could I do if I could find these Criminals?

I could not dare to take vengeance . . .
. . . So spake Los, travelling thro' darkness & horrid solitude;
And he beheld Jersualem . . .
. . . Among the ruins of the Temple, and Vala who is her Shadow,
Jerusalem's Shadow, bent northward over the Island white.
At length he sat on London Stone & heard Jerusalem's voice.'

And more, the procession, the chain of body images and solar fires, punishments, ecstasies, planetary revenge: ENERGY.

Swedenborg, the feeder and source for Blake, was buried in Wellclose Square, alongside the Ratcliffe Highway, the immediate neighbour of St George. It is even conceivable, according to Kerry Downs, that Hawksmoor helped Cibber to design the Danish Church. 'O Swedenborg! strongest of men, the Samson shorn by the Churches, shewing the Transgressors in Hell, the proud Warriors in Heaven, Heaven as a Punisher, Hell as One under Punishment.' The body has now been dug up and shipped back to Sweden but the name remains in the ground: Swedenborg Gardens.

The Marrs lie on the south-side of the churchyard of St George, but Williams' mutilated and broken corpse has been taken out from under Cannon Street Road, his bones scattered. The skull was stolen . . . possession of the talisman passes from publican to publican . . . it was for a time hidden at the Crown & Dolphin . . . but is now lost in rumour.

These facts fade. The big traffics slam by. A work ethic buries ancient descriptions.

February 4, 1974, and I endure an apocalyptic dream of the moon disk growing, crashing down on the city, burying

itself in the tower of St Anne, Limehouse. It is the Tarot of the Moon: 'hidden enemies, danger, calumny, darkness, terror, deception, occult forces, error.' I had not then seen the church by daylight, but recognised it immediately on my first day as a gardener.

There had been one prior visit, by night. We had gone to Regent's Canal Dock, beyond Stepney East, in pursuit of the rumour of water vegetation Dagon ghost presences at this place. We walked across from Hackney . . . Globe Road, White Horse Lane, St Dunstan . . . a bricked-up terrace, *LEB OFF*, that ran towards Stepney East station . . . white light flashes on the low clouds, electrical faults on the elevated railway. Into the warren . . . Juniper Street, Redcastle Place, Elf Row, Glamis Place, Butcher Row . . . and there is the black oil water and the punctured cauliflower cloud helmet around St Anne. The church oversees the dock. And we are surprised to discover on a hump in the grounds a white stone pyramid.

The Hawksmoor churches have a close connection with burial sites, Roman and pre-Roman. The Romans regarded east London not as a place for the living but as a necropolis for the dead. The Mithraic Mysteries were confined within the city walls. Christ Church rises out of Spitalfields, which was excavated in 1574 when the brick-fields, from which Brick Lane gets its name, were being dug. Bone masses were then discovered; cartloads. Ashes. Powder. Skulls. Stone coffins. It is interesting to see again that progress that is true of many of the present London Markets: burial ground/Hospice/market. Vegetable in this case. Smithfield takes the meat route: Templar Hospice/Tournament Field/Fair/Place of Martyrdom Fire/Hospital.

Ratcliffe, which lies to the south of St George, is an even earlier burial ground: Red Cliff, – overlooking Wapping, the hanging dock, place of execution, the chained bodies washed over and fed by three tides. An ornate sarcophagus

was removed from Ratcliffe Field during building work in the 17th century.

And I connect the present churches to this mood. Relate them to the four Egyptian protector-goddesses, guardians of the canopic jars. I associate the churches with rites of autopsy on a more than local scale.

St Alfege, the first church, is represented by Isis . Nephythys guards St George-in-the-East. Neith , the woman wearing the red crown, has to be present in Christ Church. Selkis , the scorpion goddess associated with the scorching heat of the sun, must have St Anne.

That was my hunch: confirmation followed. Sunstroke at Limehouse church; – and then the fact brought out at a lecture on 'Roman London' by the Egyptologist, P. Clayton, that a fragment of a coarseware jug, dedicated to Isis, had been found on the foreshore of the Thames not far from St Anne.

We are pushed towards the notion of these churches as Temples; and as cult-centres. Courts and gardens where the living communicate with the dead and receive wisdom from them. St Anne seems to connect closely with the 'Mortuary House' which C. E. Joel writes of in 'Megalith into Pyramid' (*New Diffusionist*, July 1974):

'. . . the Valley Building . . . was situated on the bank of the Nile where the funerary procession in its boat was disembarked for the final stage of the proceedings. In the fully developed pyramid complex this building was a small but elaborately designed structure of stone . . . the design may have arisen from a hypothetical former pavilion of a less durable nature, a structure of matting on a framework of poles lashed together with ropes, which may have been the building called in ancient texts set-netjer *(pavilion-of-the-God). On one interpretation this structure served two purposes, as the "Purification-tent" and as the "House-of-*

Embalmment". Furthermore, it is also suggested that after this temporary mat pavilion had been translated into a stone building, the purification ceremony still took place in a mat pavilion erected on its stone roof.'

St Anne fulfils many of these requirements: as geographical and spiritual site. We have the possibility of access by water for the funerary procession – the Church opening onto Limehouse Cut. St Anne is, in fact, an island shrine; stands at the base of the great lingam of the Isle of Dogs, the Pool of Testes aimed at Greenwich Hill, St Alfege.

'Thy heart is dilated with joy, the Pool of Testes becometh satisfied. Seth hath fallen, his two hands are hacked off, cuts asunder the knife his joints.'

We find reason enough for the haunted dock, the light upon water, the climbing vegetation, the paths of observance. And the elaborate design, the fanciful arrangements of brick, take on meaning. The raised symbols are no longer random. The stone translation is not word perfect, its occult grammar is not constructed with full consciousness: accidents occur.

The forecourt of St Anne, and of the other churches, is the area set aside for sacrifice and ceremonies of fire; first ritual of purification. Christ Church opens to the market and is surrounded by chicken slaughter houses, kosher and Bangladeshi cages and fly-curtained back rooms. The larger human sacrifices already mentioned must be taken as over-reaction, excess of zeal, or assigned to the full tide of late-century fears, the ninth gyre, messianic spasms found in Sioux Ghost dances, dervish visions, Golden Dawn sitting rooms.

The forecourt of St Anne reaches back, through an early-Christian sense of protected dwelling-place and stable, to the church as host. In the gardens that back onto this area may be found a goat and several collections of chickens. The

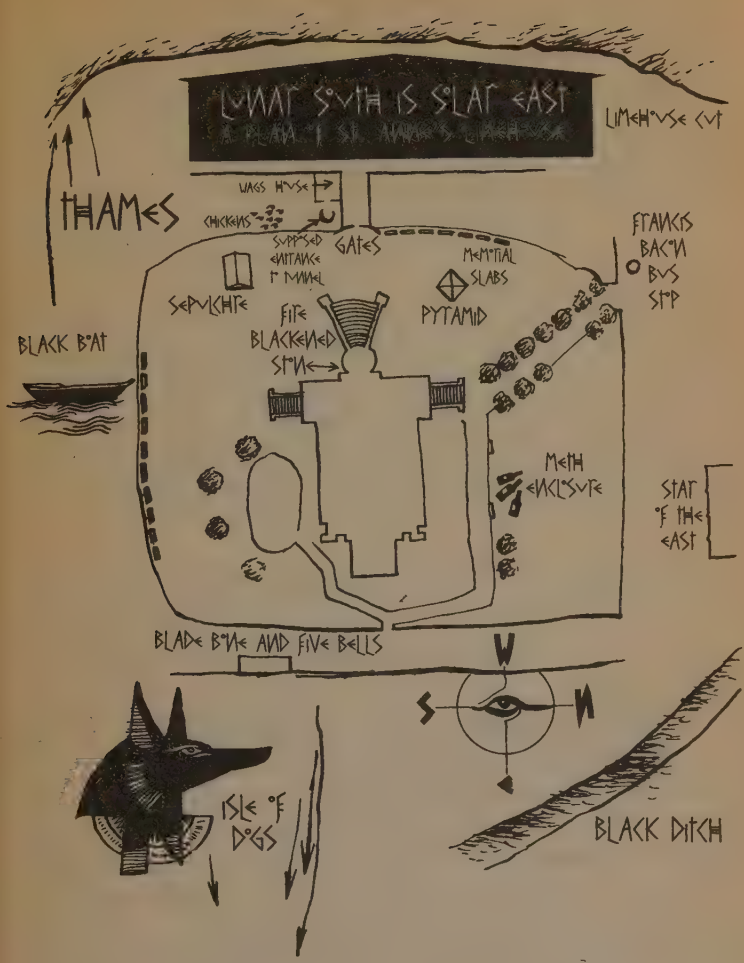
tomb-keeper, Wag (Wepwawet?), is not above filling his garage with rabbits. His familiar is the dog, wolf-headed patroller of the pyramid. Wag, the legend-maker, also claims an underground passage between his crumbling house ('where Charles Dickens used to stay') and the crypt of the church; – which would fit with C. E. Joel's analogy of long-barrow chamber tombs and the Valley Building of the pyramid complex.

'It is in the forecourt area round the entrance to the passage which leads to the burial chamber that is found such evidence as survives of the rites carried out when a body was being interred. Of these, fires and animal sacrifices are the most definite. Signs of burning occur in various forms, patches of ashes, areas of scorched earth and stone and pieces of burnt bone.'

The walls beside the steps and the crypt exterior stones are blackened by fire. The tomb carvings offer evidence of fire worship.

The steps of the church lend themselves to the mathematics of Osiris: the Nine. Climbing to this number yields the mystic position where vision is at its most powerful. Eye travels out through the hoop of the gate. On this step we achieve weightlessness and lift, momentarily, into an extended plane. Behind us is the enclosed staircase, the Wind Tower, the crypt entrance, the hidden spiral of steps, down to the incubation cubicles – 'oracular dream cures took place in side chapels' (G. R. Levy).

Sir Thomas Browne is the laureate of this mood. As he says: 'to subsist in bones and be but pyramidically extant is a fallacy in duration' . . . or again . . . 'if Aegyptian Philosophy may obtain, the scale of influences was thus disposed, and the geniall Spirits of both worlds do trace their way in ascending and descending pyramids, mystically apprehended by the letter X.' Pyramids, their meaning.


LUNAR SOUTH IS SLAT EAST
LIMEHOUSE CUT
THAMES
GATES
SEPULCHRE
PYTAMID
BLACK BOAT
FIVE BLACKENED STONES
METH CIRCLESUTE
STAR OF THE EAST
BLADE BONE AND FIVE BELLS
ISLE OF DOGS
BLACK DITCH

Hawksmoor was obsessed/possessed by pyramids, continually working them into his draft sketches: the cubical lanterns at the eastern corners of St Anne – in the 1716 version – are crowned by tall pyramids (which the masons omitted). Masonic Time versus Pyramid Time. It could have torn the pins out of the whole structure, so that the beast would have shaken itself to dust. The idea of the Temple built above water, natural rock spring, travelling at one speed with the earth; placed, solid . . . opposed and countered by a defiant edge of preservation-time . . . the empty coffin . . . chamber moving too fast to be seen shrinks to dust . . . defeat of despotic eye. Again: the pencil drawings of 1716–17 – 'the stage above the belfry supports a sort of pyramid ending in a large Ionic capital, perhaps made of lead' (Kerry Downs) . . . omitted by the masons. The constant drag of day-to-day reality, practical considerations, blunts the overt statement of high ritual, the claim of kinship. So that the more obvious symbols, the elevated pyramids, are excluded – while the arcane and disguised, the subversive sentences get through, and are still operational.

St Anne, in plan, is seen to be closely related to the horned scorpion gate form, as described by G. R. Levy; *The Tombs of the Giants*, Sardinia. And this goes back, once more, to Egypt . . . not by direct route, carried in migration – the plodding cultural-transfer theory – but by sap connection . . . . archetypal expression of common needs. It is the essential shape of a particular kind of fear. Hathor, the Mother Goddess, whose horns hold up the moon disk . . . so the February dream is apposite, pre-vision . . . and the church is the goddess is the body of the house . . . contains Osiris, by assimilation. Our rapid spirits trace out a moving cage of paths and tracks around the pyramid . . . are bees, pieces of the sun . . . under the sign of the winged eye . . . the influence of the great emblem . . . Lily, Bee, Vulture, Snake . . . serve the church. The conception is chthonic and underlies the construction of the temple. The temple is a map of the idea, built to accommodate the desire of the god – a sacrifice: that the god might enter the hollowed body, in fire

. . . be present . . . his word. The church is a mummified bee surrounded by water. The sycamore is here, the acknowledged body of Hathor, feeding the ground with milky fluids . . . the ground feeding the tree with the emanations of the gathered dead. The fruit of the union is Osiris, whose corpse is scattered, is divided up into the 8 churches. The tree is folded about him. He is in the movement of its branches. His words are loosed upon the city, are not regarded. And the river journey of Osiris is repeated, again and again, in the funerary processions of his worshippers, in the rising and falling of tides.

There is a token pyramid in the ground alongside each of the churches: to the south of Christ Church/to the east of St George/to the west of St Anne. These pyramids are the removed brains: the first and most essential of the autoptic acts. The brains being removed through the nose by puncturing the ethmoid bone. Held under white stone. They must be activated by the chanted word of need to animate the shell of the building, to bring life to the beast.

St Anne is again the truest fulfilment of the Egyptian prototype. We are told (in the British Museum *Introductory Guide to the Egyptian Collections*) that:

'on the east side of the Great Pyramid is the mortuary temple, in which the funerary cult of the dead king was practised, and from it a stone causeway leads to the edge of the desert to the . . . Valley temple in which the final rites were performed on the body of the king before it was taken to the pyramid.'

So what has happened here is a reversal in scale: that the mortuary temple has been enlarged, its function swollen – and the pyramid, the astral power, been reduced. Natural and ancient rhythms are perverted in Golgonooza's architectures. Tho' Hawksmoor, at least, had a sense of the paradigm, the condition of light, that had to be pursued.

At St Anne the church (Mortuary Temple) is to the east of the pyramid . . . the stone causeway (the Highway, becoming Commercial Road and West Ferry Road) does lead to the desert, the great swamp of the Isle of Dogs, which did hold a single chapel, now destroyed, its only ritual focus. Or, alternatively, we can read St George as the Mortuary Temple (the body of Williams) with the Highway connecting to St Anne on the edge of the desert, as the place of final rites.

These pyramids can claim a relation with the lost pyramids of Glastonbury that flanked the burial place of Arthur, that mythologist's bottomless pit. M. R. James writes of them:

'Among the strange old things at Glastonbury which I most regret . . . were certain structures which William of Malmesbury calls "pyramids" of stone, in the cemetery, carved with figures and inscriptions which even in his time were difficult to make anything of. They went back to the period of Celtic influence, and I cannot but suppose that they were something in the nature of the "high crosses" of Ireland . . . No fragment has ever turned up which can be supposed to have belonged to one of these . . .'

Herodotus was also interested in these structures, himself an initiate:

'Wishing to go one better than his predecessors on the throne Asychis built a pyramid of brick to commemorate his reign, and on it cut an inscription in stone to the following effect: do not compare me to my disadvantage with the stone pyramids. I surpass them as far as Zeus the other gods. They pushed a pole to the bottom of a lake, and the mud which stuck on it they collected and made into bricks. That was how they built me.'

The location of this pyramid fits in the present context:

'The site of the building is almost an island, for two canals

have been led from the Nile and sweep round it, one on each side, as far as the entrance . . .'

Which is St Anne: whose arms are the Limehouse Cut and the River Lea. She stands at the gate of the swamp, the Isle of Dogs; Anubis-guarded, jackal, patron of embalmers, chief citizen of the Necropolis. A tainted place, as Pepys records:

'So we were fain to stay there, in the unlucky Isle of Dogs, in a chill place, the night cold, to our great discomfort.'

It is not mere supposition that Hawksmoor and Herodotus were linked. We find a scribble on Hawksmoor's Mausoleum plans for Castle Howard, a sketch for 'The Belvidera / After Ye Antique vid. Herodotus/Pliny & M: Varo.'

The churches live in accordance with so many sacred conditions. They are sited by water and by springs: we know now that an underground stream passes beneath the Christ Church foundations . . . that St Anne, St George, and St Alfege all front the Thames . . . that Anne's border is the Limehouse Cut . . . as Alfege's is the Ravensbourne River, becoming Deptford Creek. Water . . . the sex element . . . dark purifications, change, maternal suicide invitation . . . responding, dominating . . . allowing the buildings a connection, making them part of one body. MY NECK IS OF ISIS THE DIVINE. MY FOREARMS ARE OF NEITH, LADY OF SAIS.

And if there is the generous (female) birth of light, there is also the red claw of vengeance: Christ Church and St George-in-the-East. George is Sphinx, a lion body sprawling along the Highway – 'terrible, living' – as are the four lions of the south-gate of Golgonooza. LUNAR SOUTH IS SOLAR EAST (Yeats). St George is Blake's East in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*: 'spiritual wrath.' The lions of Urizen forge the geometric shapes that underlie the material universe.

'Then siez'd the Lions of Urizen their work, and heated in the forge
Roar the bright masses: thund'ring beat the hammers,
many a (Globe del.*) pyramid*
Is form'd & thrown down thund'ring into the deeps of
Non Entity.

For measur'd out in order'd spaces, the Sons of Urizen
With compasses divide the deep; they the strong scales erect
That Luvah rent from the faint Heart of the Fallen Man,
And weigh the massy (Globes del.*) Cubes, then fix them in*
their awful stations.'

Urizen named his 30 African cities: Egypt. 'Pharoh in his iron Courts and Dragon of the River and the Furnaces of Iron.' River/Dragon . . . St George again. Dagon. Nepthys, the canopic guardian assigned to this church, was supposedly a female Neptune, threatening inundation, that the River must flood its banks and make the dry soil fertile. These mistranslations give us the swamp-lands of Wapping and the Isle of Dogs. Or Blake engraving Fuseli's *Fertilization of Egypt.* The description in Foster Damon's Dictionary:

'. . . he interpreted an Egyptian god as the blind cry of the flesh, the prayer of the animal which is in us all. The dog-headed Anubis faces inward; his uplifted hands pierce the cloud-barrier as he appeals to Sirius, the dim, six-pointed Dog Star. But all stars are Urizen's, and it is Urizen who answers the prayer with lightnings and storm-floods of water. Blake added a musical instrument, a systrum, lying neglected on a bank; hinting that a means of invoking true deity was being overlooked.'

And this is the other coding at St George, the curvature and stony design of an unplayed musical score. Spiral form notation. Church an instrument. Unregistered pitch.

The speed of the track increases and information fattens to

excess. It is the greasy slope of madness, time-bends, over-stimulated blood hooks at the high air. Blake is too bright to be looked into – even at this distance. The whole structure becomes top-heavy and falls beyond control. Mark out a possible ground-plan for further and more calmly detailed studies. Speak of the excitement that is still there. Acknowledge energy.

The sun culture is a danger . . . too hot for random flirtations . . . to hold up that sign in the crow town, Llyn Din; to affront the buried head of Bran. Hawksmoor, bird name, climbs above Wren's civilising city patterns. Fires his wing: Herodotus tells us that 'the obelisk is the symbol of the Sun God at Heliopolis' . . . Lautreamont warns that 'the weight of an obelisk stifles the spread of madness' . . . Hawksmoor risks an obelisk over the grave of William Blake. He understood its meaning, the clenched stomach cancer fears, and managed to pen his *Explanation of the Obelisk* (Blenheim Library):

'an obelisk. On the Apex (or Top) of the Shaft, may be placed a Star . . . The French Set up an Obelisk at Arles . . . On the Top was placed the Sun . . . But that (parhelion) or false Sun, was forced, to Leave Shineing by the Influence of a British Star, the brightest Europe has yet at any time, ever Seen . . .'

What cosmic order does he affront, or do we affront, by raking over these old wound paths in this Year of the Tiger? Breaking the code of the churches gives us twin fears: fire and inundation. These holy places are ashlar-faced tombs of the sacred crocodile . . . or they demand sacrificial flame. Consume, consummate: God's place. Possession of the hollow body by demonic, multi-tongued, fires.

St Anne was gutted by fire on the morning of Good Friday, April 6, 1850. Vernal Equinox, time of occult threat. The organ pipes were melted by the heat, the altar windows and all wall-monuments were destroyed. Ceremonies continued

to be performed . . . in the Vestry, above the crypt stairs. Can we connect into the same grid of influence the incendiary insects that fell on London in the 1939–45 war – the nights of firestorm zoned in on these targets? In the blitz of 1941 St George was gutted by fire-bombs, it remains a mummified shell. And, interestingly, Cleopatra's Needle was scarred during the first ever raid on London by a German Aeroplane, a few minutes before midnight, 1917.

The second fear is also confirmed in the texts: flood. Maitland's *History of London*:

'The Chapel House *in the* Isle of Dogs, *or* Poplar *Marsh; is the Ruins of a Stone Chapel, but when, or by whom built is unknown . . . probably . . . inhabited till the GREAT INUNDATION towards the Close of the Fifteenth Century, occasion'd by a Breach in the Bank of the River* Thames *near the Great Shipyard at* Limehouse.'

The great stone animals are shaken – but not, finally, destroyed; the surrounding streets crumble. The risk of the Manhattan Project is there . . . the way the Japanese used the sun as their totem. Future suns of blinding energy do glint in the mute pallor of the stone. Fossil forms mark the ascending steps. The systems of worship are bankrupt, the buildings stand.

To close: G. R. Levy's formulation on the Maya:

'None of the Gods of the Old Empire reached a human personality. Though partly animal by totemic assimilation, they appear to modern minds as natural energies held prisoner in time and space, engaged in ceaseless warfare to maintain their stations in equilibrium against the horror of infinity. Their expression, in an art of unsurpassed splendour, is formal and abstract, its elemental dynamism weakened neither by organic human synthesis (even where it is compound), nor by human thought and emotion.'

CLOSED FIELD, THE DOGS OF THE MOON

May 13/Monday:

Start work King George's Fields, E3. Assistant gardener.

Interview in the office of Mr L. Wood, the red, vein-faced, geordie boss-man; who sits on his heater, drumming well-worn heels. Child-sized hands rest on his knees, his wrists are made of string.

He discovers my next-of-kin: 'just in case.' He warns of 'rough and ready language.'

My name is on the form.

'I've been down here twenty years. They're not friendly like us northerners.

He gives me the Parks Department Manual to take home for a little light reading. It includes such nuggets as:

'7. Writing of Books. While occasional literary or artistic work is permissible, special consideration would have to be given to the writing of books for payment on subjects relating to an Officer's or employee's work for the Council.'

May 14/Tuesday:

Sun burns the neck.

Tractor-driver Ben reads an account of the death of HRH the Princess Anne's horse, Doublet.

'Be better for one of us to be shot than that horse. A right shame.'

May 15/Wednesday:

Wreck my first multimower. Wrap it round a section of fence, hidden in the long grass of Rounton Road. Arthur is not dismayed. He relishes (again) the role of initiate/corporal.

Take my lunch to Tower Hamlets Cemetery.

The bothy cat, Pickle, gives birth to three kittens. Foreman 2nd Class P. Millward is putative father.

May 16/Thursday:

Urine, milky with sperm. 'Their semen is not white like other people's.' Haze sky, moist air. Shu & Tefnut. The fisted phallus of St Anne: beyond the stadium, above the railway.

This wide-sky space scale is working into the blood stream. New time vitamins. Necessarily slowing (pulse) to the rhythm of all-day in the open. Earth sucking at his boots. Cuts away from the routines (& expectations) of home life.

My intuition is confirmed. Foreman 4th Class P. Healey is a hay fever victim. His sufferings, an early warning.

May 17/Friday:

Mugged by heavy clouded sky. Bicycle through Victoria

Park to work. Uncut lushness. The white of horse-chestnut candles.

Heat bands; alternating hot & cold of diesel fumes, cruising the length of motors held at the red lights, Mile End Road. Last night's dream comes through again. An invasion of white rats, scuttling over the steps of a double-ziggurat. How to kill them? Gas, club or cannon?

The duty now is pastoral. To walk out with wicker baskets & scatter chalk-coated pellets of fertiliser over the municipal grasses, to impart that sheen, high summer greaser. Which must then be cut back. But this is easy work. I have time to look across King George's Fields at the group of industrial buildings on the far side.

Here there is money hustle. Flash cars all along the fence. Work faces stuck on expensive coats. Fur & leather bits. Fork-truck cola beans. And the leisurely shuffle of the giant dustman who works that route. Immensely slow, his pram of selected refuse. Another system, another time-scale.

For the morning session Arthur eases the landrover (never exceeding 18mph) through Ellerman Street, Lindfield Street, Sturry Street, Cyril Jackson Primary, St Anne Limehouse, Copenhagen Place: casting the granules to left & right, wide flung arc of the arm; soon accomplished. Old Holborn rolls-up. Fluid horizontal plane of consciousness goes up in smoke.

The afternoon takes us, gently, to St Saviour, Campbell Road, Rounton Road, & Spanby Road.

At home I plant three artichoke crowns.

May 18/Saturday:

sits
the coat of darkness, wondering

if he would ever write it
a small
hand of light
melancholy
turkey wafer swells in his throat

in another room the electric serial
loud & raw
has taken something from his eye

'pray stick to the point'

the sentinel wood
lime, sycamore, london plane
the immigrant sails
recording night breezes
an enclosure of persecutory bulbs

the cat
is claimed is pregnant the white hairs
of fear mark my shirt
so many call
so many coffees wines

these are the summer words
& if he works
it is not all because he has to
face down
along the curve of falling energies

there is nothing more
or less
than to become unconscious

to hood this day's falcon

May 21/Tuesday:

Clearing the junk from Cannon Street Road: grass dog patch under the protection of St George-in-the-East. The spike gathers varicose bandages, corn plasters, blood rags, handkerchiefs, condoms, newspulp, lobotomy turban. It refuses

the glass, which is taken by hand. Courage Light Ale, Strongbow, Old England (White) British Wine (coach & horses trademark), 59p a bottle, available from Westminster Wines, Ben Jonson Road.

At our arrival the guardians of this site move on. They assume a different character as they hit the street. Brown suits are pressed by deep-grain slumbers. An innate time sense saves them the expense of a wrist-watch. They slide towards the Crown & Dolphin.

May 30/Thursday:

Lizard stretch sky. Dust pollen cuts the eye. Wind.

One of the kittens, the black, does not move. The others climb on the body. Mr Wood scoops it from the box: white flake hands. Presents it to the mother. Who sniffs it, washes it, & turns away. Mr Wood places the dead thing on a chair & goes over to the cold water tap to dilute his mug of tea. The kitten's lower limbs are still warm, the heart frozen.

At this point the dog handler arrives. Pink & soapy, with tales of the brown sex police. Insulin skin glow. Glasses set into a vegetable skull. Tightly knotted tie. Red shoes violently bulled.

He attempts to project the aura of larger fields of force at his disposal. Being part of some more massive & paternal scheme. Operates under licence of the planets. A swift tongue of lust flicks through his yarns.

He speaks of Victoria Park patrols. How the dog pricked its ears outside the tool shed. The handler sprung the lock to confront 'an old man' of 'about fifty-five' in company with a naked woman of the same age. She was on her knees. He was 'in the act of' mounting her. His male member described a falling curve. He asked if he would be allowed to dress. 'No. Out.' The handler fondles the image to a near climax. As

man & woman stumble into the yard. A Miltonic banishment. Fire & treacle of self-righteousness.

The handler's eye is blue ice.

He tells of rape. The dusky shrubbery. Dry earth odours. The eager beast straining at the leash. He drags 'a youth' off a screaming girl of 'about sixteen.' The seeds of germination are cast fruitlessly onto the ground. ((To bring forth a holy fountain? Or new plant form?)) No charge is made. To the disgust of the handler. 'He's my boyfriend.'

Arthur & Ben munch on hunks of cheese. Wood snorts in one nostril. Peter Millward rapidly sifts the *TV Times*; he has no television set, but likes to trump the men's morning reminiscences. Ben goes over the *Sun* with a magnifying glass to locate the winners, who must declare themselves if he concentrates long enough on these columns of newsprint. Arthur, with an eye on the bothy clock which now signals the end of the tea-break, prompts the handler to one last effort.

A standing couple. Varnished by the serpent lights of rush-hour traffic. Three yards onto the turf. Woman keeping look-out over the man's straining shoulder. A centaur of darkness.

These urgencies. Sharpest imperatives & oldest instincts are broken into. Citizens' privileges upon their own ground are destroyed. The open lands are chained & bolted. The handler pets & fondles his wolf.

At the end of the day the cat is gone. The dead kitten is still on the chair. Mr Wood offers his humour to Pat the groundsman.

'Go on, Pat, confess it. You put your spike in her.'

Which Pat has actually to deny.

At home the blackfly have invaded the broad-beans.

June 5/Wednesday:

Joe returns, eager to join the work force. A toe, severed by the Flymo, earned him a few weeks at home. But he can't take it. Back to the bothy society, limping.

The boss-man does not enquire after his health. It is as if the corner seat had never been vacated. Joe notices the kitten shit in the crack of the floor under his chair, but does not move. Puts his cap in his pocket, unfolds the *Mirror*.

A telephone call has pushed the boss-man into an angry monologue. Cardinal Heenan's visit to the Borough is the excuse for some fancy grass-cutting.

Wood dredges all the bile & phlegm & domestic pain that he can muster. All the poor food & weak tea.

'Fuck 'em, the cunts. Let the Irish fuckers die. Hunger strike? Let 'em fucking die.'

'Cardinal Heenan? Piss on him. Let the fucker go to Ireland. Let him go on hunger strike, the pig.'

'They're all the same, those fuckers. The Pope's never set foot in Ireland. He knows what would happen. He'd be fucking shot.'

We drift out, back to the peace of the landrover.

Joe settles himself, selects, & lovingly undresses, a toffee.

'If Heenan walked into the bothy that bastard would kiss his fucking ring.'

THE WHEEL OF HIS DAYS

the sunset is sand on the floor of the lightbulb
it is earth but does not grow
        he found
no print of his skin upon the beaten grass
& the blade that bruised his nail did not
edge the meadow
                a wire fence
holds in some of the rubbish

'let's get away from this kind of high flown language'
worries the man with the uneasy eye

        he can't
keep his mind at rest   it pains him a fever
going against the tide is refreshed
by even these sidelong glimpses of water
as we drive through Cubitt Town
towards the bridge
                back

within sunlight, adoration;
bird chisel
(vibrato), a
watery brand.

also the cat vein ticking in the throat
another morning is already present with its slight
mysterious differences

it is so connected we share all
symptoms & meanings,
bicycle wheel spins
a wobbly mandala;
this is pivot
to a chain of phasic dental disasters

the polythene flag flies away on
a bruising wind that is dug from my heel

soil poultice retains warmth, on we go

blood-land: a method of seeing

frenzied coughing-up of carpet fur
homebaked bread, damp
& cut like an embryo
the attack
begins on all fronts
howls cries
according to the aperture of various throats

the day opens & they wail for it;
allow the radio in
bandage the ancient, early valves

cod liver,
a fast
better left unbroken

by the brain's small bunsen
eyes shut in a box
for one week
slide open on the black
fur gloss of mother's belly

life globes
even in this place

cutting & bruising the dull grass carpet
sage medicinal odours revive
hands weary from gripping the limit

Culpeper commends this:
'against the stitch, or pains in the side
coming of wind . . .
defluctions of rheum'

vertiginous cloudbrick monuments
dwarf the petty transactions of survival

the source is revealed
Bryan-& Mullinger ROYAL OAK SPICE MILLS

'Fragrant spices ltd'
float out over Broomfield Street

we return to base
zoned to the time arm

worksheet filled, home

'flow'r of towns'

o, OPEN; trick of fingers .

shutter flashes gunoil, lizard eye
opposes the random movement
by producing the solid

earth number, 4: Wands or Staves,
cambers the ecliptic;
the topsoil, brushed by besom, hides the cracks

. rake the sandpit of dead flies
. cut off the signalling of groundsel
. find yellow surprising

the smoothed knees are raised
& the blood runs downhill, they could take out
a yard of vein, shift it to the heart shop
they do not do it
a casting vote goes against surgery
views: *Frankenstein & the Monster from Hell*
& comes back up into the cloud to discover
a shattered patella, destroying
the fingergrip of the steering wheel
chrome face of accusation
African mathematics
cattle, tse tse
brass loop around neck, suspects
bongage, does not find it repellent

vines climb over the antler
it will ground up; the bone tree
it will fracture, the cloud plate

beaten into submission, learns to value
the freedom of slave's time,
the burden is the master's.
break wrist
kick start the multimower

for a dole that is returned
gas, heat, artificial light, telephone
& the collection of household refuse

across the lid the threads of used incense write

'as for myself I cannot believe fully in my own existence . . . the weather is threatening'
R.L.S.

the problem when I am
'not quite myself'
what, (not who), is
walking this road, Mile End,
so blankly
trying to make contact with
the specious
traffic-driven boulevard,
St Clement's Hospital,
bridge, trees, & sky

the other citizens of the pavement are looking,
(are they),
the paving slabs, active,
some
pressures driven down
harder onto the impacted gravel
& blue clay
that is almost stone again

they do not spare the water to break up
the school, Old Church, tulip bed
it gushes,
Arthur & I sit in the sun
he: on a school-allowance milk crate
me: on the concrete that covers the ground
my eyes are sore
we both yawn
he has two weeks due in Cornwall

only one worm in the whole patch
'poor drainage,' says Arthur
does not care, obviously, for this ward

the water sound should soothe

he has a car (Ford Capri, GT)
but asks often for the time

& that becomes my function

teabreaks are calculated
the rituals pushed through

it is what we don't notice
that is worth remarking, & without insistence

the pain is in the northern sky
fish fires light the low horizon
his state-
ments choke in the pipe
land
is bereft of tree signs
from the west
the wind is a rapid
cyclorama

cut by grit, blind
pushes the bone on
all blossom
torn clear,
we plant against long melancholy

lobelia, petunia, stock,
antirrhinum, geranium (Caroline Schmidt & Paul
Crample),
the maligned alyssum,
begonia (red & white), fire-king,
salvia, marigold, cineraria

how the gardeners
hate this, would rather cut grass

it is noted, bitter
claimants, pain slips checked
& signed for

sneeze
bicycle
Herodotus

Tower Hamlets Cemetery respite

'buried face down their songs
should not rise & offend the ear'

the man
whom the trees did not love
makes peace kneeling with the earth worm
his small heart
creased

16
EYE

is the glyph
that indicates the secret gateway
to Victoria Park

hung from a New Kingdom-style Pontiac
Grand Prix motor in walnut
finish

where an imaginary jackal crosses
the elm path, without acknowledgement

To Find A Focus

leaving; the lamp standard
covers the N
giving us CROW HOTEL
(Truman's, inevitably)

spins on,
Industrial Sand, Bowater, Shell

scribbles the word signs

in the toilet hut, the bikeshed

cloud stools knit together
a dark thatch, the wind
is slow to move them on

the men stare out the electric clock
offer the shrub garden a week's notice

RITES OF AUTOPSY

The Act of Seeing With One's Own Eyes
a film by Stan Brakhage, viewed June 10, 1974

'There's very little that's understandable to me about life, or even bearable, except the seeing of it.'
Stan Brakhage (7/1/72)

SEEING IT AGAIN, that cold blue procession of light, gives a sufficient measure of detachment. It is now possible to move back the necessary inches from this awful revelation of meat.

Autopsy: meaning 'the act of seeing with one's own eyes,' from the Greek. The act made in such a confrontation of the body's most deeply held fears. We move down into the very heart of the city labyrinth, breaking the first seal. Pittsburgh, metal town. It has been a physical struggle to set up the conditions for the making of these films (*Eyes/Deus Ex/Act of Seeing* . . .). Dead money is involved, funds from the Museum Corporations, grave profits. Police favours are required, the soothing oils of journalism. Brakhage has to operate with that stain and to make it work, to make the tension active.

Behind him is an honourable tree of achievement, shot in warmth, in gold-brown light of *Scenes from Under Childhood* in blood flow, snow and water, the windows of home. The mythology was domestic and the magic white: 'waiting for the grey lady to whiten in the corner.' There was the control that a man has over his own life, and the lack of it. Digging deep enough into the frame to arrive at the junction

beyond ease, avoiding nerve habits of vision, using the counter-muscles of the eye, being present as *Witness* where he could not remain without the camera, where he could not be still, and the camera had to drink his movements of escape, where the heat of pain printed direct, where the joy and the love burnt away the emulsion; the first birth, *Window Water Baby Moving*, the voyeur friend risk of *Lovemaking*.

Brakhage took Dog for totem. *Sirius Remembered*, his own dead animal; or himself, as *Dog Star Man*. Sothis would be the appropriate deity, dog star on her head. Fear also, 'recurring dream of pursuit by dogs intending to tear me to pieces.' Dogs/priests, Irish and Ethiopian cults of sacrifice; the cave, memories retained.

Songs, serial fragments, day-to-day lyrics, the luminous stream, dense layers and repeated bathings that strip the frame of all nostalgic anchors of reference. When death is present – as with Sirius – the camera follows an animal heat-path of loss, pushing into the tall grass. It circles. It does not look through the event, it looks with it. *The Dead* filmed at Père Lachaise, Cemetery of the East, offers the light of death, the glow of decomposition: a long way from the Allegheny Coroner's Office in downtown Pittsburgh.

Brakhage handles the film, the chemically contaminated strip, scratching the black away, that most primitive image-making process. He crushes the bodies of moths, so they are themselves, directly, the medium through which the light shines. Much of this is enacted in hermit retreat, in high country. 'A man of wood,' he has been called, by one who visited him.

And, now, this natural man leaves the cabin of protection, the worn time-track, and takes his whole trembling bundle of asthma fears and demons to the city, to a darker initiation. He is orphan, taking on again a condition of loneliness, placing himself beyond the temperatures of

domestic ritual. Three moves, deeper and deeper into the closed societies of the city. He looks for cramp. The city as unknown father, upon the table of the land. He wants, at this time in his life, an adventure at least as dangerous as the Moon Trip. This is to be a private Moon voyage, the terrain is equally hostile, equally blank. He wants to enter the enclosed spaces. To give up the illusion of freedom in movement. He is granted access to the theatres of life and death: the night patrol police-car (*Eyes*), open-heart hospital surgery (*Deus Ex*), and the coroner's office (*Act of Seeing . . .*).

Brakhage's initial idea-structure is soon abandoned as inadequate. He had intended to cut a strata down through the city, following on a notion of Ed Dorn's: City Hall, Hospital, Football, Gangsters. But the fire could not be stoked, it remains too abstract; he did not find himself in it. Another word of advice from Dorn became the key to the whole operation: shoot first, ask questions later. Open the shutter, like a vein, to all possibilities, without calculation, but with the deftness of long familiarity. First hand. Live. Raw. The uncooked moment. Document, not documentary. Direct, not directed. Reality turning onto the spool at 16 fps, is grasped with greedy hands. 'I had such a desperate need.' It is happening so fast that he cannot know it is happening. The store of diverging moments is replayed, in repose, as a different thing. The snake of time thrashing as he takes it by the tail. 'The most naked fix I could manage on what was transpiring.'

This is what he carries into the police-car, into the operating room, the morgue. His weapon is a new 15-inch lens, to be hand-held, against all printed instruction. 'Your heart beating will create an earthquake in the image.' You breathe with the camera. He cannot get far enough away from the action to get it in focus; therefore the lens is detached. Lens in one hand, camera-body in the other: complete control of physical rhythm. And he is in a deep ambivalence, at a 'safe' distance and also forced by the focal length of the lens/eye

right up against the pulsing valves or the freshly opened skull. That Olson chant running through his head, 'polis is/ eyes', the Olson figure of death also pervaded the hospital.

The Act of Seeing With One's Own Eyes was largely shot at the Allegheny Coroner's Office on a Sunday morning in the autumn of 1971. Sunday, the busy day of weekend suicide and mayhem, full house. Autumn, the time of equinoctial danger. Murder season, days of sacrifice.

Brakhage does not use the filters that would give 'correct' colour balance, so we are plunged into a cold blue corridor, refrigerated emulsion.

We can only watch these secret operations *with our own eyes.* There is no other way of behaving. These things are hard to look upon. Their gaze is severe and unblinking. They are not intended for the uninitiated eye. It initially involves an act of will: to go against the married instinct; not to turn away. We do not have the comfort of the eyepiece to stare through, we face the whole blanket of the screen wall.

What occurs?

The rituals are casual, conducted without sentiment, with an impersonal skill that is almost tender. We are seeing something old, but corrupted. Not performed in a sacred state of grace, to high purpose – it becomes, through Brakhage's sacrifice, grace-filled. What price does he pay? There is the double risk of bearing witness to secret rites and the primitive fear of soul theft. These souls are mutilated and loose, scattered. They give off the poisoned light (heat) that translates impulse into image. We know about the photographs of fields that kill all insect life within that frame. We know of the concentration of a man putting *all* his attention and will down the tube at one moment in time. This cannot be a single-direction process. Something comes back up, is sucked, willing or unwilling, into the flat black box. The situation is volatile. The force field is purple with energy. We

have reason enough for the light to quake and dance. Brakhage knows that he is becoming the Cursed Man, the mystery breaker.

These acts are close to those Egyptian autoptic rites that set free the Soul Bird and preserve the body shell. Anubis weighs the death upon his scales. He supervises the measurement. The hands of the practitioner are his, as they slice up the dead shape. The knife 'manifesting upon incision the signature of a Starre.' But if they bottle the removed organs it is only to fill a police report. They are scribes to the book of the city, which remains unread.

The intersection with hieratic ritual is accidental, Brakhage discovers, or invents, it for us. His vision of the city uncovers a tradition that survives, in corrupted form: as death itself has been corrupted.

The face is peeled back, which is the individual as we know him; and Brakhage 'had the immediate perception that the first masks made in the world must have been the actual faces of the dead.' The lid of the skull is lifted to reveal a horn/antenna of bone. The chest shield is removed. The heart bird is without protection. The whole body has meaning, as heraldry, as code to some sterner mapping of purpose. This is not a random collage of edible and inedible matter.

The doctors are splitting the seconds of flesh, are cutting through the idea that the skin is a whole, one single garment, and not an infinite net of dividing events, operating at different time-speeds, knitted together in the eye, as the film itself is held by the retention of the dying image on the retina long enough to give the illusion of seamless movement. The body is a false cloak of minutes, and here it is parted, and its lies are numbered.

Information is squeezed out of the pineal gland. The affair is faster. The guts are scooped. The bag of corruptions is

spilled, warm, burning up the paste of rotten meats, beers, pickles, fish, cream. Green blubber is peeled like foam. The drill smokes, whirling through bone. The enclosed chamber is thick with dispersed voices; so many lives, abrupt terminations, accidents, fantasies, deaths on the street, burst brains. Energies thrown suddenly into reverse.

Trollies glide their polythene-wrapped bundles down underwater corridors. Gaudy rags are strung around the butchered meat. Underwear from crime magazines. Soiled vanities. Incomplete confessions, prayers, curses, mix and overlay the track.

The soul is as a brief flicker of magnesium light. An illusory blue needle of flame above the chest. A lens fault. A leak of eternity. In this pit, a blade of hope.

And then Brakhage lets us glimpse the whole taint – the cigarette-holding slaughtermen in their white coats; as they dictate statistics to the recording machine. He ends with this, does not dwell on it. That is another film, another side of the story, how the coroner and the medical students 'act continually . . . humorous roles . . . one of them said he always wanted to be Fred Astaire, and he liked to tap-dance around the corpses . . .' That underbelly of ritual, graveyard clowning, savage lessons.

We notice, finally, the austere silence of the film; the muffled clubbing of the cinema door, clatter of wedge heels as RCA students refuse to confront this thing further, return to their sponsored strategies.

'The eye is thine, Horus.'

on my birthday
to work
turning the prayer wheel
of the cycle
south-east

towards the thick
Cubitt Town
lingam

(this morning
gifted with a sacrificial shirt: it can't
be worn)

coming back,
across the horizons of vision
with the stone anther fountain,
St Anne

look: with
my daughter's dungarees they give you a compass

the london plane
bouffant
drops its sticky light
hoses a segment of east city
last rim of sun
the furnace banked down
with asbestos leaves
death stretch of this day
waiting on
the antechamber
sleep
the tallest reality

'time is skin'
here to here
autopsy

dig out the soft fruit interior
paddle the scoop
– black dog –
children shout it
birds keep their heads down

'he thinks of you as totally evil'
'a con-man'
'wise'

shuffles these shock alternatives
& selects a low option

continuum of tapwater
works repairs

the stem is cracked the delphinium 'dies'
blackfly decorate the broad-beans
if these are the totems of the moment we
suffer them
& gladly

COUNCIL PROPERTY
NOW WASH YOUR HANDS PLEASE

the hosted gaff
bladder
weakened by incursion of dandelion
& other air-borne seeds so early
(any excuse to use that word)
already
foreman 4th class (P. Healey) is hiding
his vowels behind dark glasses
& shifting to his reserve handkerchief
the enquiries of pain continue
daylong the wake of grass dust
cuts his face into a set frown

loss of egoic grip
it may be
a good thing & even a passport
to Bliss Out & homogenised
7th heaven
'service'
has so many enfolding shades

boil the tea-dregs bitter tin
a true brew of this north island
whose existence is now un
fortunately confirmed

'many . . . burn the veins on their heads, & sometimes on their temples, with a bit of greasy wool, as a permanent cure for catarrh'
Herodotus

picks up a piece of the jigsaw sweeping
the yard looking for the clue into this day
fearful of the mist threat
the merci
less heat rays cooking all internal organs
no mercy either
in continuing these 'spiritual exercises'
no god is
served in such harsh & scouring self
love
tearing the flesh in his nails along
the field margin
the multimower hurling
dirt in his face
the stalks of his legs
are bruised & bruised again
it bends to
his purpose

not the flesh
that is weakened arms
the colour of bacon

what is cooked out he follows
Midsummer's Day all rituals enacted
in sleep only
serves the tax machine
waters the lettuce

'I WANT IT'

everything that is not *here*
& everything that does not answer to
now
& everything wants this wanting
so that the lack of comfort becomes
a fixed definition
the pain is unremitting doesn't
want to bend into irony
or floods of *local colour*
won't be shifted more than two inches from the skin
can't be talked down to
coheres makes sense
he has to find the words to keep pace

it is briefly night again
sun climbs its ladder
drops on his head
it could
begin to stutter or break
into a Bergman cry for love
for the love of god
the rape & commingling
with the divine drill-head
he hopes

it's not that
he doesn't know
what it is

all bets are covered
with an incredible system of side-stakes
& double-entry bookkeeping
the unconfessed
use of public buildings as symbols of safety

if he can look all day
at the alternating facets of St Anne
he is safe
it is safe
then what did that moon dream mean
& why does he feel his eardrum
beating through his cheek
why can't
he bear to sit still when his mother talks

if only it would fade
into a rain dance
like that three minutes sheltering in the tractor-shed
away from the shovels of topsoil
when the waters beat out of the sky
onto the yard
& he was able
to draw breath & the murderous
calm was splintered & wind came
shoving the cloud train clear
for that evening hour
'the golden hour' of Hollywood legend

when he feels sick to be out
& goes out
& feels good
& feels sick to be good
knowing that he must
be sick again

they talk about 'real life'
behind walls
home is cupped in their hands like
prison cigarettes
he describes his own life
as if it were a one-day vision

in a restless dream the true poets accused him
he was late for work & took the morning off
for rapid sexual gratification
in the corridor
rolls across the floor

woman in such steady pain & panadol for two days
& nights from the knife
parents
have assumed their bed

more shit stains on the bowl after the weekend
than at any other time
how I envy
the neat fast physical descriptions
I found in that (Chris Torrance) manuscript
the dream
with the observed world is shared
envy
not the descriptions but the state of mind (grace)
that composes them

converted to ease
elasticity of vision
deepest
confession of ecstasy

'opening up the hopefully uncensored self to the present
the fallible, living trace that is us in the world'

A Theory of Hay Fevers

'Avoid sun-or-other light, seek to travel in such a manner as to inhabit only the autumnal-and-wintering seasons, shun the company of fellow human beings, sleep as little as possible, etc. – or specifically: he must cave-live, at least as one does in the concrete city, run from the hunt of the summer equinox, avoid all flowerings, sex, laughter, or other human excitements, and rest preferably in a squatting or other wakeful position cautious to eliminate his dreams . . . And so know and use "the Dark Lord" as Blake knew and used him . . . as even Solomon used him to build The Temple.'

Stan Brakhage, *Margin Alien*

WHAT IS OPERATING here, in collapse of open-air efficiency, is a form of priestly prohibition. Red eye, streaming nose, skin irritation: are caste badges. Our bodies are wiser. Disease (greater or lesser) is a form of pure message, is concise as glyph. These summer days in length of riot and grass orgy are forbidden to the sufferer/adepts. They should hold to their rooms, they must remain in the cell of water. The sun hunt cannot seduce them from their manuscripts. They watch the boar pass, in envy. Darkness is the price of their power. Power is the measure of their failing, as natural men.

The incapacitated foreman (4th class) adopts the ruse of smoked glass: hides the eye, the knotted vein-held boil. There might be another side to his suffering (and this whole equation) – that his self-image is higher than his rung on the

ladder of reality. He talks of 'O' Levels as if they were edging-irons. He savages the student, who is extra to a newsreel demonstration. He plans loftier careers, buys a Ford Cortina, photographs weddings, gets more children. Projects himself into a new landscape. Hay fever is the anchor, the counter-balance.

These accusations go against the poet with equal force. If he is not truly 'here' the fevers will nail him. The continually drawn handkerchief is drenched with his melting ego. Discursive thoughts run out of his nose, the attention is concentrated in one place. He listens to the smell that is no longer there.

Brakhage, asthma priest, keeps his eye hidden in the cool socket of his viewfinder; concentrates all pain out into the captured image field.

Which recalls the worst days of suffering . . . filming at Silbury Hill, or taking photographs of Avebury, the Ridgeway . . . punishment for defiling the mysteries. Thick midsummer drift of grass seed, midge helmet, surrounds these shrines, hovering over the aquastats; spirals of protection and warning.

Other warnings are closer. 12/6/74: his black polished limestone pebble, Monknash cursing-stone, disappears from his left-hand pocket; and from the landrover, the plastic shabti figure. He had found this in the grass on his first day and had immediately adopted it. The shabti would continue his true work, while he rested in labour: 'dying each other's life, living each other's death.' Monotony of body-work is release, a suspension from the looms and motors of the brain cup. The shabti could inhabit that space, keep the communication active. It was hidden in the back of the cart among the hoes, mattocks and baskets. A double loss was sustained. He was opened up to the whole horror of the sun.

Disease initiates are forbidden the pleasures of slavery. They

may not enter that world. Or they will be broken. They may not celebrate the season of fertility in the land. The May Day dances seal their door. The Green Man is a tree of blades they may not embrace. The July oak-sacrifice is their order of release: 'one-eyed sacrificing priests.' Their time of action is the autumnal equinox. The Irish ritualised the date of the beheading of John the Baptist as August 29; Jack the Ripper took his first victim, Mary Ann Nicholls, on August 31. These are rhythms to recognise, to accept or to oppose.

'The Adept, however, must recognise that the body with all its functions is God's own creation, and the dual polarity, the force and the restraint, is the divine formula of all creation, from the flower to the man.'

The Cromlech Temple's teachings on Morality and Sexuality, as recounted by Francis King.

The fevers are a restraint and a cause of restraint: the Reichian diagnosis. What has been held down will flower in this form. Plant birth. Each disease discovering its own markings. A garden of dividing songs and repeated chants. The tonal displays of chastity.

We are punished for taking pleasure. We are punished for not taking pleasure. We are punished.

This theory goes (or does not go) equally for other classes and degrees of body text. Said Kotope to the hesitating sculptor: 'You know why you stutter? You think nobody wants to hear what you have to say.' Not so. This is the formulation of a mental muscle-builder, someone who has lifted his idea-structure from a Charles Atlas/Dale Carnegie confidence kit. The answer is less glib. It is to do with use of air; finding the breath for an individual score, flutes of bone in the throat. A sequence of pushes towards that silence in which THE THING can be made. The oracular tongue is bitten by snakes. It is too thick for the mouth, it curls back. He speaks with tongues, very slowly. Hesitation: as for the

creature with a single strike, fatal to itself as well as to the victim.

Local pains block the ease of conduct in the world. What you suffer is the place you choose to live. Do not remain victim to a solitary level of discourse. To play safe and obey the surface warnings of sickness – or to take the pain route, grasp the nettle, move into one plague after another; reach the godhead by the muddiest route. Alchemy of body particles; avoid the static condition. The magician is born of incest; is, by definition, diseased. Suffer it.

The cure, like the theory, is retrospective. When we understand the condition it no longer exists.

'Things which have once been in physical contact continue to act on each other at a distance after contact has been broken'
J. G. Frazer

mowing down the English Martyrs the poor
drainage & burnt grass yard of Kentucky Fried Chicken
    the nuns keep them back
behind wire
    quadrangle garages & Bangladeshi
clothing factories repress the martyrdom
bank down the fires
    resilient bents refuse to be cut
the multimower machine whines & clatters
leaves a neat impression but is not
finally triumphant
    foundation stone
laid & blessed by Cardinal Heenan

    we mow further
tear across the carpet strips of Sts Mary & Michael,
St Saviour, Cardinal Griffin, St Philip
Howard & the Holy Child
                all are

shaved & prepared

    the steep bank
at English Martyrs is allowed to run wild
these gradients await

the arrival of steels & spikes
a wariness is apparent since Joe left
the top of one of his toes

at Sturry Street
slipped under the Flymo on the milky grass

vegetative revenge
Joe offers himself does not
voice refusal or make automatic
compensation claim
states his
fear of the long building beyond
Campbell Road
the hospice
where his mother died

'they take you in & you never come out'

low
pressure across the south lands
the clouds bruise our shoulders
but grant this pre-breakfast vision
of Limehouse Tower

the bicycle
bucks over lime roots
they have turned the tarmac apron
into a wave-sequence chart
& shake the veteran Raleigh
to its death rattle

edging
is a rest cure
carry out
the edging shears
a formal Egyptian implement
'weapons of convocation'
stated the letter in its abrupt wisdom

marks of faith occur
as the bents of flesh submit
drunks in the night
push the hedge down & spew in the flower bed

I am what I have to sacrifice

'the citizens of London had from time immemorial used to hunt within the aforesaid woods . . . hares, foxes, conies & other beasts where & when they would'

in Victoria Park the level & type of perception
changes
is no longer so persecutory is opencast
as if the forehead were cut away
& the breeze of the tree enclosure
played upon naked brain wires

the thing here
is that all messages come direct
in natural metaphors
the seed mace
of the chestnut rolls over the palm of my hand
its small
spikes touching the near-surface nerves
falls
to the ground

or the coke heap
picked out with russet leaves
again the chestnut
long slatted mask face

wind is
a wall of protection
does not drive against the skeleton
nesting birds
dive for scraps that can be found

so everything encourages
a system of notation that could easily
be described as
'an optimistic world picture'
we are here briefly to dump a hawthorn hedge

the jacket is buttoned
but the hands
warm to their task
slide
along the rake handle
heat the primary basin

combing dry grass hay into mounds
good work
a field of birds

angel of protection alights on the tenement

it is a field of memory
out of reach
drawn up through the prongs
as the rake drags over the ground

earthed impulses fire our tendons

we cannot see
the river beyond Lime Kiln Wharf
but Joe tells us this was
the Limehouse origin
where Stow
speaks of Lymehurst, or Limehost

domed Greenwich comfort
out of reach in the Land Rover
speed

of playground

when the page is utterly replete
I'll move on

Big Meal

her legs go upwards into eternity & well
out of focus
the red buttons
are stages distinct as f-stops
look how the full
moon becomes an area strongly linked
with the horn antennae of this snail
crossing our path Keats Grove
sublime
bedroom preserved
the tiles of lung
blood confirming the pure status
of his quotable formulations
the cases
of preserved emotion

we can look
with a whole body of lust across the table
the libidinous plates the Upmann cigar
& German wine
the lies
shield a condition of secrecy that needs all
his five-litre cunning & is the holiest mood
he can summon in the heat of
the matter between them

they wait on
a cold platform it does not chill
the truce of love the modular basket
they share watching fish
in an air-
hosed tank
spending money free
as the bubbles break the longing
between them of the ancient dead
generations to mate again
& be born

FROM CAMBERWELL TO GOLGOTHA

A reading of the double-chamber presented by the sculptor, B. Catling, at the Royal College of Art, June 1974

'Life when one does my kind of work is rather strange'
W. B. Yeats

TO BEGIN WITH the specific occasion, an exhibition (in every sense) of final works, at the Sculpture School, Royal College of Art, visited twice: June 10 and June 15.

The ground impression is obviously depressing; enclosed, cunning, banal and proficient. Our seduction is attempted. There are cries for love. Gambits and ploys are made in the force field of what-is-expected. No hand of guidance. No austere master/disciple relation. No stern apprenticeship worked out. Welfare state feeds its woolly victims to the media wolf. A spurious search for 'originality' has been encouraged: we are surrounded by congealed examples of manner, framed gestures. Content is a starving zero. The whole thing bends respectfully to the industrial and the most 'impressive' items are the ones that are charged with some degree of self-recognition: smooth machine artifices, skilled constructions. These are a small measure of the soul of the time. They earn a degree of respect, even though they suffer from the need to charm us.

It is within this poisoned context that I encounter the Catling zoo. The man is obviously out of sympathy with the essential strategies of the institute, yet does not oppose them with the kind of bitter and repressive fury that is, finally, self-

mutilating. He doesn't waste his energy. Prepared to work undercover he gets on with it as far as is possible in this sponsored, other-directed, environment. So there is a strain that pulses in the neck and causes the eyes to bulge.

The first claim is that he uses the totality of the room as his own place. It is not a storehouse of accidents or any kind of shop-window. We swallow the taint; the pathology is not the true interest. Avoid the art fanciers who stroll through, fondling the merchandise and getting their claws into a piece of the future.

Along the walls are monochrome line-drawings. I read these as dedications to the necessary gods, compressed strokes, king lists, pages from the book of self-invasion; disease slides, protected by glass. They relate fiercely to earlier sequences, but are further down the track, the line is hotter, the news faster. There is sharper nerve, teeth in the sand. Detail sows the eye into a labyrinthine chaos of arrow lines, highly energised black wires that cancel their opposing thrusts: so that the total effect is a frenzied calm.

The contours have been borrowed from Upper Egypt; pyramid metaphor is active. The autoptic instinct is a genuine concern; we meet again that skull-horn glimpsed in Brakhage's film. Dissection by blade-pen reveals the processes of dry weather, the testament of the white ant. Catling discovers what is 'Egypt' in himself; relevant to his carriage in this city.

We are close to that image, mentioned elsewhere, of the astronomer's rib. The parable speaks of a Star Watcher, his night-eye fixed lustfully on Saturn . . . he is drawn down the tube and out into the heavens . . . it is that Brakhage ambivalence again, on a cosmic scale . . . quivering close-up of the planet's pores at a distance that is measured in light-years. The motor is an implacable hum, as telescope hungrily tracks the heat of the desired object . . . flame of excitement, the opening of *Prelude: Dog Star Man* . . .

astronomer's brain-cup crushed against the curved wall of the dome . . . vision, at that moment, spurting into the star field . . . cold sperm. It is happening here: the eye is harpooned, one of his ribs breaks free, dipped in Indian ink, traces the pressure marks on the revolving drum, the Aneroid Barometer. The bone needle moves mechanically. The message is remote, and the blood of this satellite, if leeched, would be malarial and white.

Signs, half-understood symbols, made fast enough to avoid the censorship of the technician's hand. Limits. Of flesh and of rock. The Man/Beast/Plant forms of the earlier drawings are not much in evidence. Life is implied. The hybridisation of landscape is gentler. The obsessions are disguised by a higher need. The fences of pubic hair from the crashed aviator no longer measure the fen, the swamp. Helmet and bandage of deep sex-wounds are in retreat from the chalk dome. It was too simplistic a formulation; close to art-school desire for shock effects. Here, land is not in drag, not dressed up, and not insulted. These plates are mirror windows; they compress and extend the detail that cannot be layered into the sculpted objects.

We move from these essentially literary concentrations to the floor of three-dimensional shapes. The room is crowded. The individual items so powerful that they fight for survival with saurian relish. Flapping polythene sheets across the windows mute the light and knit a reedy Ethiopian wind along the border of consciousness. This is the tower flute that we meet again at St Anne, Limehouse, standing at the foot of Hawksmoor's original staircase. In darkness we listen, on the stone flags of the south-facing porch.

The wood reach of the room soon contrives the mood of a country-town museum; or, specifically, the emotion I will feel in Dorchester, the following February. There was in that building a wall of man-traps, and they were staggeringly close in kinship to some of the iron-forged forms in this chamber. They hung, gross insects, on a white wall, above a

wooden platform in a long galleried hall. They were removed from pheasant grass and woodland, and exhibited. The intricacy of their construction goes beyond functional necessities. It is the same here. These beast/machines do not discover their active purpose in this place. They are charged with a high energy potential: but it is hard to tell what actual work they do. The obvious danger is narrowly avoided – non-exercise of muscle – to become greased gladiators never summoned to the circus . . . Samurai armour, uninhabited . . . dreadnought posture, May Day parade.

A further insult that might be offered is 'Medieval Craftsmanship.' Dorchester Museum again. Brotherhood of iron. The metal of Los, of cruelty: weapons, whips, the spindle of destruction, the plough, chains, fetters, cunning contrivances of the Inquisition, abattoir skills, Templar repressions. Craftsmanship that serves the butcher and the fanatic dreamer; or the craftsmanship that is deeply and truly local, ritualised, day-to-day, forging of the tools of work, the implements of survival. Membership of a traditional and anonymous guild of honour. Wayland the Maimed. It goes all the way back. Casting of magic swords. The bellows, the cave. The strongest forms discovered and passed on. No time to admire the 'workmanship' before the jaws snap across bone.

Dorset goes deep. The shadow patterns of the winter solstice yield further insights into the sculptor's vision; as he has trapped it in these plates and constructions. What he maps by loose-wrist improvisation is as accurate as an eye-copied and over-lit linear description. The shaved contours of Eggardon Hill where the chalk gives way to clay and lias are a part of the rope of energy that Catling has schematised. Meaning is defensive: massive enclosures, works of earth – that natural use of the pulse of the land. The traps: false walls, pits, mazes, tunnels, caves, ovens, burial chambers. There is a deep relation here. I am moved by an active interplay of generosities, exchanges of code, the tenderness with which Ridgeways are brought across the bones of wood, the straps of leather.

The larger dramas of these lands are not, superficially, present. No tapestry of battle, or reference to king-myth; no heraldry, no nostalgia for 'Mysterious Britain.' Direct translations of cultural collision, the point of impact: the ballista bolt in a section of spine. Iron has grown into bone to breed a new creature. This is colonisation of the most intimate kind, possession that demands an absolute sacrifice of self; a new thing is made by a violent act that becomes, by the strength of its need, loving.

The eye/hand relation is brotherly. The sculptor is at ease constructing an oven or beating out a ritual weapon. The incantations he chants are the natural sounds of these hill ridges. He prepares the feast, selects and kills, cures the meat, with the same precision that he used to forge the cauldron. Seasonal rhythms – death, sacrifice, inhumation, rebirth – are understood and coded into the machine.

'To respect the vegetal powers'; the injunction from *Rock-Drill* is obeyed. The vorticism is implicit. It's not the vorticism of Gaudier-Brzeska and Epstein – but there is a kinship with the metallic coldness of Wyndham Lewis – the idea of wholeness: that the made objects fit into a universe created by a single generative force, or group of forces that remain in sympathy . . . architectonic wholeness . . . total invention . . . not small, valued isolated artefacts, but a sense that the sculptor has managed to realise one detail from a whole that goes to the horizon and beyond . . . stratified, inhabited, furnished with buildings, beasts, plants, stars, insects. The agent and the sofa come from a single city . . . the gigantic cosmic engineerings of Lewis's *Human Age* trilogy or the subterranean icebound galleries of H. P. Lovecraft . . . approached with a seriousness that continues to frighten the casual viewer greedy for sensation and eye-orgasms. All or nothing.

The muted sadism of these forms is unrepressed. The man works from the moist heat of the body. Body/armour is the continuing metaphor. Enclosed in a protection of limits.

This is crucial. It is something he had the instinct to cite in a catalogue note/parable. The notion of power objects buried, unseen, within the mountain. Not made for exhibition. Interest in the containing mass. To sift detail is an academic neurosis. It is all here in the coastal ridges of Dorset: burial chamber stones heaped over with earth. The horizon is the polished eye of god. He aims for the time 'when man shall wish the coverings of Mountains, not of monuments, and annihilations shall be courted.'

And I am in the grasp of these lands, revising my London notes in a cottage on the side of Golden Cap, Dorset, when I receive, from the sculptor in the city, an account of his expedition to St Anne, Limehouse. He calls it *The Labyrinth of the Jackal.*

February 7, 1975 DARK PULSE. THE CANOPIC LUNG

Visiting St George and St Anne. The ratcliffe cloud form matted in helmet bone, usual bone yard shudder.

St Anne. The organ is more than the throat, it becomes a non music entertainment, dried of tone its bellows speak only in pulse.

LOWER SKIN OF THE DEAD STAIR.

Your sense of the membrane case becomes clearer it is rooted in corpse valley. From its apparent base in the vestry it crawls down further to ground level. At this point the decay is total, that white mould gums the wood together. From here we are with Lovecraft, James and Poe. The electricity cut, only the decayed husks of bulbs hanging, spider victims, blood-drained bodies, dry. We find two candles (pale yellow, age). This virus light held high guides us.

There is a careful straining of motives, then I enter. The lower room is trenched with boxes it is an obstacle course.

The boxes contain wooden balls (tennis size), trunks of chipped and dented enamel plates, remnants of lowlife feeding. Inch of light crawling in under barred metal shutters.

We climb the dust through the crypt gates, I am sure nothing has been disturbed here for years, in places the dust and webs are six inches deep. I sink through rotted wood up to the thigh in tin plates and leather bags. It is like Abrontius and assistant stumbling among ultimate hazard.

The actual passage before us is disturbingly parallel and tall. It is about 8–10 feet wide and at least 12 feet high. The flame only illuminates four feet around us, so it seems uncertain.

There are chambers leading off from this gallery, there is a nasty familiarity, it is something like the passage in my basement rooms and cellars leading off, irregular shapes; also some of the chambers are like the maggot street hydrophobia room.

They vary from tall rooms with intersecting passages to hutches with openings only three foot square. For some reason I feel unsure about the use of these rooms although there is a positive repulsion on entrance and I only peer holding my candle inside.

The big structures that I haven't mentioned are the true force. They heat the fear line of celluloid horror and pseudo-myth into hieratic priest language. They discover and utilise the continuum of small-room English murder rituals, sealed decors, sheds and bathrooms; the rope deckchair of Christie. These quintessential forms operate on insect-time, fire at reptile blood temperature: are very calm and poised to strike with scorpic venom.

The eye is reptile also. It moves at speed around the frames of these parthenogenetic beings. 'Make him of wood/with/ steel springs'; *Rock-Drill* again, the marriage of skin and

metal. The sculptor, at this level, is shaman. He also serves the Necropolis. Objects are made in fear and expectation of death – with an understanding of the mutualities and relevances in Siberian, Egyptian, Meroean, Sumerian and Mayan cultures. I am in awe of these things. They are made for voyages beyond the rim of reason. Turrets, platforms. Mud on the feet, neck strains through the torque of stars: that energy. In photographs we see the wooden pyramid (orgone accumulator) that is so close to the Limehouse pyramid, and was made in advance of the first sight of it; intentional, willed, pre-vision.

We see that the platform of release (execution) is a body also. The act is unified, self-satisfying. The tree has ribs and workable organs. It has badges of steel, the hooks and the teeth. The ice of metal finish and the warm blood that is in wood. 'Danger threatens from a wooden host and a scarlet messenger,' was the word of the Oracle at Delphi. It echoes here.

The two most impressive items in this outer room have a tribal vitality that should have been preserved and viewed again: a raft and a sledge. ((It must be mentioned that when this exhibition 'closed,' the objects were broken up . . . no place for them. A fact which caused John Bellany, the great Scottish expressionist, to pound Catling's head against a restaurant wall: a justified frustration.))

'The raft/is the penalty and the cure.' It is made ready for the great voyage that is death. It honours the spiney form of the fish totem: the force that is in the medium through which the raft must travel. An ice platform aimed at the sub-mythic regions of Antarctica, 'the Mountains of Madness.' It contains in its smoothed wood the ghost journals and water-colours of that place. The polar metals are charged and magnetic: 'the compass is absolved.' In plain strength the aim is outwards; it turns, imperceptibly, through a field of force.

After the raft is the sledge. This contains the idea of kneeling, prayer. An object made for extreme margins; deserts of sand or snow. A cart that scorns the wheel. The driver is an idea, outlined in steel. The sledge will not, of course, move. The journey is mental and swift. From the lead strip we follow the metal promptings down the road of flint.

The sledge also relates most strongly to the urban hurdle of execution ceremonies. Titus Oates (the irony of that name intersecting with polar tableaux) suffered the road from Newgate to Tyburn; 'was this day placed on a sledge, being not able to go by reason of so late scourging, and dragged from prison to Tyburn, and whipped again all the way, which some thought to be severe and extraordinary.' The dug-up bodies of Cromwell, Ireton, Bradshaw were also transported by sledge. The strain of ritual, the desire to place horror in a formalised context; reaching a peak with the death rites of John Williams, the supposed Ratcliffe Highway killer . . . 'covered with a piece of red cloth and placed with face uncovered and upwards on a large board to be fixed upon the top of a cart with murderous instruments placed on either side of the corpse before which the common executioner might be seated; the stake with which the body is to be pinned to be borne before by a proper officer.' These are the implications in the shape of the naked wood.

There is a massive steel door covered in dust, at this point it is two inches thick; it has not fallen from a close aperture, but looks like it has been flung from the opposite side of the gallery. It is now totally silent locked in this beast body, testing its very nerve. The passage turns to the left here and I realise we are following another labyrinth. It winds again at the end of this passage. There is a small entrance about three feet by four. Inside it seems large and subdivided, like the rest it is plastered or whitewashed; there are two flange-like apertures at each side, these give me a total horror, they are like recesses that might contain small iron doors or blades. I then enter the next turn, this passage seems less disturbed, it contains more dust and the doors are wooden and bolted.

All the chambers in this gallery are sealed. There seems to be no exit. Holding the flame above my head I see there are stone tablets carved with the dead names. On reading these I feel agitated. There is one curiosity here, it is a chamber hole about four feet by three, it is about five foot deep and contains black or dark grey dust (soot), there are rags or bandages also, small pieces of twisted cloth. This is the most tainted thing so far and we set back.

This place is also like the pyramids, the isolation here is total and with candles it even looks like one of those early prints of the discovery of the king's gallery.

Dead geometric persistence. What the masonry holds beyond decayage. Compressed, the fear of form.

The absolute spine-driven condition is achieved, as is appropriate, in the inner chamber, or shrine. This is the final statement. We enter a secondary (disguised) door and escape from the museum/zoo society. The light is dim, twin bulbs, incinerated moth brains: so the impression of oracular wood pronouncement forms its outline slowly. There is no fear of this. Here function is realised. There is no question of the construction as a mere exhibit and it could not be sited other than where it is. It *is* place. The object and the chamber are truly one. We have ascended into the heart of the mystery, pushed through the valves of muscle, and seen the impurities burnt off. I am deeply moved, stirred, activated, by the rays that surround this catacomb. It is something to carry back out to the Limehouse fields: the stillness and the bandaged light. No other demands are made.

What is achieved here can probably be put as high as 'a manifestation of the divine . . . by mutual consent.' The form calls up the divinity. It is strong enough for this function. The light is 'not merely a token that the place is frequented by a God, but a permanent pledge that in this place he consents to enter into stated relations with man.' The true oracle. The sculptor opens himself, through the

shrine that he has made, to divine or demonic possession . . . it is as risky as that . . . in the way that the church body (Winchester or Limehouse) is opened . . . the need is sexual . . . consummation leading to madness.

We are reminded of the fact of the sculptor's visits to Malta, the Hypogeum, Tarxien. An island marked by Coleridge's presence, his delirium and post-synchronised suffering, the speedy journal, the attentions of his spectre. This present shrine is derived from the condition of those megalithic caves: tomb and temple.

G. R. Levy speaks of these places: 'It seems possible therefore that these edifices were erected as bodies of the Gods, their habitation in the Egyptian sense, by which the form called up the divinity.'

Risk is here that is not apparent in the smoothed finish of the language outside – rough bandages of plaster cover the elbows and corners – 'mummy truths.' He would work with a paste of bone. The rites, at this stage, are so close to Brakhage's autoptics. Orphan-asthma is common ground. The triad is acknowledged: the sacred 3 that Steiner speaks of in relation to the Templars. So the light does come through, and is made. Shattered bone groupings, directional quiverings of the detached spine, translated into metal syntax. Splints of wood. The Hospice. The temple is erected along the path of wound and amputation. The sick crouch in their narrow chamber of incubation. Access is granted. The body of the priest is become the object of his making. The message is received in silence, and not to be repeated; it is given to him who receives it.

'Sense of pleasure we may well
Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine,
But live content, which is the calmest life:
But pain is perfect miserie, the worst
Of evils, and excessive, overturnes
All patience.'
John Milton

we come out of the cycle of pains
or
the pains become by repetition pleasurable
are worn down
& go into the butter
of a fat new moon

it can't change any more than
the faces of the playing cards the gradual
fading
of the carpet that is eaten away
by sunlight & fails
as our eyes fail
beyond measurement day by day
the new
mornings are prepared in sleep & spring no
surprises
dreams are sleek now filled

with pasturing delights
with round words

gentle landscapes
the sofas are human
& enclose every vertebral ache

to persevere
as the writer said to keep going
include the sick days the clouded
sequence
to come through & be content
to sink to drown with a closed
mouth

we loll in the pleasure of it
until that becomes boring & the eyes
ache again for images they cannot bear

'staying beyond reason'
the thing
that made americans godlike that worked their
destruction
the quality of these temples
lying white on the lap of the city
it is necessary to will their downfall
that they be born again
the flamelike
maggot rules this chest
shooting out

the eyes of the dead
'we're too many/& not enough'

John Ford no geographer
all landscapes Monument
all weathers

the Valley
the gathering rivers of death or rest
'medicine country'
skull rocks
wind
speaks the language of the tribe
a language
we do not learn

we think of the end &
plan our shots
cut our visions
in the tube out from the heart of darkness
Abbey Theatre tableaux
sculpts the
rictus the fixed emotions

nothing is
totally drained of meaning
we become
vague as John Wayne can never be vague
we abandon the quest
doubt ourselves our fathers
reach for the weapon in suicide also
are not
finally generous
have no decent sense of when the picture is over
& it's time to walk away

we allow
the weather to master our tenses
we bleed
into our boots
wail
when it does not hurt
ambiguous
counting the hairs on the brush

the city is not like *The Searchers*
strangers

rush the frame & clutter the composition
if
there are scars we disguise them
where the odd gods are they do not remain

with Llewelyn Powys:
Now That the Gods Are Dead

'the second was that of Origen, That GOD would not persist in His vengeance for ever'
Sir Thomas Browne

picking up on that unlikely hope

what is hardest to swallow
is that the moment persists to eternity
flesh clings like a wet poster
& does irritate
contrive small tortures
demotic

boils & lesions

the healing of the soul is therefore postponed yet again
we let
the Yoga lessons wait & the Divine Light
remains in East Dulwich
you mock
at your peril

plan a walk
avoid Origen's excess of faith
there have
been darker months
we
break open the bones to light our way

can we save enough to pay the surgeon

the pages
of his script
are individually handed out
we stumble through
'walk on by'

Saint Swithin's day
vaticinal
russian stout & tentacles
crawling out of his shaken orifice
the sky's
a wretched audience, slates him

Hawksmoor's Tower of the Winds has much to answer for

despite all these doomy props
his spirits are high
vows to practise his breathing
not yet ready perhaps for 'the knowledge'
but willing to continue the search

coughs up a range of blues & greens
that Klee would have envied
already
the leaves are falling
water remains in the felled beech
giving a false luxury

or Joe reports the decay of his lettuces
rained out
soft at their hearts, brown leaf
dead on the stalk,
a diet of radishes flushes him

Charlies wears the shingles cap to unblock the drains

Tower Hamlets dustmen are on strike
rats scale the south downs rubbish
two stray cats shelter in the hopper
we're talking about tv cholera & playing crib

rain beats on the roof, industrial claims are in
the foreman
waxes sentimental a Barnsley Christmas with his dog
frost & the brass band playing 'Silent Night'
you won't shift far
in a single generation, the programming is too tight
the wounds respond elastically

the ambition remains
to construct a more generous sentence

3 birds
a flying wedge
translated into the white triangle symbol
painted on the gasometer

recognise the augury
do not know what it means

the colours all in sympathy
grey base
whispering greens loaded with lime
mossy roofs
blue serials banked out

prepare the rain case
the velvet-
lined casket
pinch the growth tip towers
the overstated architecture
feel
the cockhead crackle & spit

axial itch point

the clue is buried in stern flesh design
complete before seed breaks out of earth

sitting upon the red obelisk
Tower Hamlets Cemetery

'j'ensevelis les morts dans mon ventre'

THE VORTEX OF THE DEAD!
THE GENEROUS!

'For strange it was not that he should sometimes dream of the dead whose thoughts are always upon Death'
Sir Thomas Browne

AT THIS TIME the work force is swollen by seasonal labour, mixed motives and rumours of other worlds. Many seek the comfort of these long skies; the 'lifers' speak of earlier visitants – jockies, lay-preachers, Orient footballers, Scots students cooking Chinese lunches. So the landrover interludes stretch and the quality of our rest period alters, acquires a new animation. Our 20-stone opera star has to ride shotgun, his bulk and volume preclude him from the back benches, where Joe is at home, flanked by the sculptor and the narrator.

The intensity and commitment with which Arthur rolls these sites, his Old Holborn between his fingers, is broken into by Charlie's desire to demolish all irrelevant architectures with his decibels; his 'top C' has the added advantage of lifting skirts.

Arthur is seduced by all this grotesque *bonhomie* into releasing a part of his interior vision, his illuminated codex, which is a list of meals, food replays, steaks, salads, scampi risks, restaurants, roads, nights-out. Joe remains aloof, hoards his more esoteric treasures, the Japanese years and

the European holidays. But now, under soft prompting, he connects us to the pouch of local legend.

The sculptor draws him out, and Joe remarks upon our habit of ecclesiastical lunches, Bede picnics: St Anne . . . Tower Hamlets Cemetery, the obelisk . . . St Dunstan. It is of St Dunstan that he speaks.

This is an old centre, in urban fade, now locked and abandoned by the westward drift of social powers. Dunstan is the church of the voyagers; the register of all births at sea. It is the church of the drowned lands (the 15th-century crack in the wall at Limehouse-hole inundated 1,000 acres – there were dykes on either side of the Mile End Road as recently as the 18th century); protected place upon the great fen, the Nomansland.

The church took its name, and some measure of its power, from Dunstan, the Glastonbury reformer, who rose under Alphege's patronage to the Bishopric of London and, finally, the see of Canterbury. Dunstan has a concealed or disguised meaning, is a lapsed symbol, where 'every symbol is an invocation' (Yeats). He is metal-worker, alchemist, and bearer of west country grail-force, waterlight. He was a chalice maker, the Ace of Cups is in his hand. Home tells this in fairy-tale code:

'The legend of St Dunstan relates many miracles of him, the most popular of which is to this effect: that the abbot, as the fact really was, became expert in goldsmith's work; it then gives us a story that, while he was busy in making a chalice, the devil annoyed him by his personal appearance, and tempted him; whereupon St Dunstan suddenly seized the fiend by the nose with a pair of iron tongs burning hot, and so held him, while he roared and cried till the night was far spent.'

Dunstan helped to create the notion of Glastonbury as alchemical seat of earth magic. Elias Ashmole, in his notes to

the *Theatrum Chemicum Britannicum*, states

'It is generally reported that Dr Dee and Sir Edward Kelly, were so strangely fortunate, as to finde a very large quantity of the elixir in some part of the Ruines *of Glastonbury Abbey, which was so incredibly* Rich *in* vertue *(being one upon 272,330), that they lost much in making* Projection *by way of* Trial, *before they found out the* true height *of the* Medicine.'

The content of virtue is translated to Stepney. St Dunstan is an enclosure of light, a counter to the muddy hymns and saturnine autopsies of Limehouse and St George-in-the-East. Dunstan was only one of a number of figures who forged the polar connection between the west of England and the eastern border of this city. He carried a slower and more deeply mined time-pulse. There is a curve of optimism that he represents. The other obvious example in this field would be the Montacute/Waltham Abbey connection. M. R. James relates the experience of the Montacute smith who was

'thrice warned by our Lord in a vision to dig on the top of St Michael's Hill . . . He took the priest of the place and others with him, and when they dug they found a great stone which split and disclosed a crucifix of black flint; under it were a wooden crucifix, a bell, and an ancient book. Tofig was absent at this time, but he came back, and by the advice of the priest put the flint cross, the bell, and the book on a cart drawn by twelve red oxen and twelve white cows, and named various great English sanctuaries aloud. The animals did not budge until Tofig, in despair, said "Waltham." At once they took the way to Essex and finally stopped at a hunting lodge of Tofig's at Waltham. Here he founded a collegiate church or abbey, which Harold afterwards established as a house of secular canons.'

Dunstan's Stepney (Stebunhithe, Stibenhede) was an isolated but dominant parish on the eastern approach-line.

Colet, whose name is still bolted into the area, was based here; and was visited by Erasmus, who wrote: 'here you find nothing but bounteous gifts of nature and saint-like tokens of innocency.' Their debates put grace into the soil. It was an island of right-handed vitalities. Exotic birds and beasts were noted within the circle of trees. Some high level of protection and illumination had been purchased.

Stow speaks of this:

'I find also, that in the month of May, the citizens of London of all estates, lightly in every parish, or sometimes two or three parishes joining together, had their several mayings, and did fetch in May-poles, with divers warlike shows, with good archers, morris dancers, and other devices, for pastimes all the day long; and toward the evening they had stage plays, and bonfires in the streets. Of these mayings we read, in the reign of Henry VI, that the aldermen and sheriffs of London, being on May-day at the Bishop of London's wood, in the parish of Stebunheath, and having there a worshipful dinner for themselves and other commoners, Lydgate the poet, that was a monk of Bury, sent to them, by a pursuivant, a joyful commendation of that season . . . beginning thus:

"Mightie Flora! goddess of fresh flowers, –
Which clothed hath the soyle in lustie greene,
Made buds spring, with her sweete showers,
By the influence of the sunne shine.
To doe pleasance of intent full cleane,
Unto the States which now sit here,
Hath Vere downe sent her owne daughter deare.

Making the vertue, that dared in the roote,
Called of clarkes the vertue vegitable,
For to transcend, most holsome and most soote,
Into the crop, this season so agreeable,
The baumy liquor is so commendable,
That it rejoyceth with his fresh moysture,
Man, beast, and fowle, and every creature." *etc.'*

There was also the Ratcliffe (Red Cliff) connection, the direct passage to the Thames, the World Ocean, the way out, the original landing-place. The church tower was seen from the river. Flags and fires carried away on the tide; last badge of hope to bear out into the stream.

The plague years started the burial of fear; the dark overlap. The garden was filled with pits of the victims: black compost. A boundary mark surrounded the church wall, but the rest of the ground was given over to the taint. August and September were the death months: 72 a day in the second half of August, 1665; 95 a day in September. The script in the death book changes as the Parish Clerks join the heap.

Remember that Los took this route.

'Fearing that Albion should turn his back against the Divine Vision,
Los took his globe of fire to search the interior of Albion's Bosom, in all the terrors of friendship entering the caves
Of despair and death . . .
Walk'd difficult.
He came down from Highgate thro' Hackney and Holloway towards London
Till he came to old Stratford, and thence to Stepney & the Isle
Of Leutha's Dogs, thence thro' the narrows of the River's side,
And saw every minute particular: the jewels of Albion running down
The kennels of the streets and lanes as if they were abhorr'd'

Joe is grown from this territory and carries the harsh splinters of childhood incident as a warning against excessive demands on the current material rump. And Joe tells us how he had been assigned to work this enclosure. In righteous awe and respect of the old tokens, the books and the windows, the memorials. It was his pleasure and his duty to speak to the visitors who recrossed the seas in ancestor

pilgrimage. Until the incumbent cut across this. Refused to unlock the doors outside certain hours. Until Joe was summoned back to work from King George's Fields, to accept the Stadium as totem. And the fortune of the parish fell with the putting out of that beacon.

It had come to Joe, along with a summer casual and wildman, young Johnny, to clear the old sepulchres. To rake off the topsoil and dig into the earth. The stones were needed to make flower gardens. The ground rental was not to be renewed.

Joe, the fall-guy, stumbler/survivor of the triads, drove his spade too hungrily into the turf and dropt through into the vault. His feet going down among rotten wood to crush the bone skeleton powder. His fear was authentic: 'goose pimples like golf balls.' Kneeling on the dust sternum.

Young Johnny was the other thing, no tenebrous spinal awes, no scruple. Savage eye for the main chance. Nomadic and sudden; food-stained overalls cover his pyjamas, a cap pulled down tight on lank and greasy hair. He crowbars open the huge lead-sealed box and chews the gold ring from the bandaged bone hand. And carries it back to the bothy for closer examination. The vibrant aura of Joe's fear is so powerful that Johnny relents. The ring is returned.

A service is held for the reburial of these bits and pieces. The commandant, Mr L. Wood, attends, his first visit to the operational front. Joe is also present, but stands off, under the trees, modest and horrified.

the light is mortal
out of the body nest
the ego is not murdered but shelters
in gardening
a chaos of plant life loosed to discover its own parliament
it is
a table of skeletons talking
father fixations
stab the bean porridge
fingers are burnt upon pancakes
no meat fuel is taken
Elk Bones
offer the dead word the message of tomorrow
on the reservation
the drums
summon old gods

our dreams mislead us
swerving through this the weather
changes & rain brings relief in the night
dusty soil drinks a preparation for cabbages
he cauterises
the memory of these monologues with Rimbaud

don't wake the baby
his wife holds her nightdress is pink from
sleep
scribbling at dawn no work today

it is only our faults we have to offer
this is the true nature of the feast that
breaks our communion

& we no longer
need to detail the clothes the wines
this much we *have* moved

the cat
chases the bee drawn to the light it
is man who cannot leave it alone &
acts as his meddling nature intends
& breaks the chain
throws open
the door
burns us in starlight prem-
onitions of equinox
mutual admiration
of the electra complex

understand this
step is bitter & no metaphor
will explain it

proud of their wretched karma the bone lips
yap
& fed the wise
stomach stifles its complaint

so the
instinct must be honoured *not*
to go back
as the man said
unless we can do it *exactly*
each footstep in each footstep
or simply
recharge the present

because here
the genes fall into the old pattern it is
sexual or pre-sexual
language

is the leaf-system
one attacks another defends

the women
romance each other
all rapes
are sublimated in seizures of food

mouths filled we play it out
but the conviction wilts
the chromosomes
are snookered

Death is the fuel we are using up; its smell
not unlike petroleum. Sickness. The tree plug
drains. Sky: colour of vein tissue. Too much
melodrama, churchyard lunches. Picnic against
the pyramid at your risk.
The absurd latenight horror film is oracular:
puppet theatre truths. Charlie asks for the
names of the trees. The woman in this game
remains 'on the side of life.' But she's gone.
The plans to view F. W. Murnau's *Sunrise* are
shelved in hollow body collapse. Swallow the
commercial maggot &
acknowledge the respons
ibility is Mayan.
Feeling his heart
under a red shirt,
sunstroke spews up
a snakeshead. It
stares from his
mouth. The black
plans are shelved
also. Acknowledge
the heart's enlarge
ment. The screech
of unclassified gulls.
Heart does sing to be part of the fire chorus.
Consumed, standing on its legs. A spider
in the cave. A blue plastic bowl is
at the bedside, he will not be
sick. Work is a telephone
call away. Obey the war
ning in your teeth
Trust your inst
inct if you
can find
it.

IN THE SURGERY OF THE SUN

August 6

'While Manu, the Sun-Initiate, guided the more highly developed human beings from Atlantis far into central Asia, there remained behind in Europe the lowest of the low – those who had fallen most deeply into error and corruption by the betrayal of the Atlantean Mysteries'

George Adams, *Mysteries of the Rose-Cross*

'The spectrohelioscope shows a further transient phenomenon of flares or eruptions. Occasionally, in red hydrogen light, an intensely bright spot may develop within a few minutes and then die away again. Such spots are usually associated with active sunspot groups. What they are is not certain, but they may be considered as gigantic explosions on the sun. When they take place, strong ultraviolet radiation is emitted simultaneously with the visible radiation; both reach the earth at the same time. This ultraviolet light affects the D-layer (one of the gas layers in the earth's upper atmosphere) and causes a radio fadeout. One to two days later, further radio interference occurs, as well as magnetic storms.'

The Penguin Encyclopedia

His guard is dropped. He is at ease with the rhythm of the days. Joe has his week's holiday. He drinks the calm restraint of Arthur's routine across the tired grass. The pollen dance is

broken. We bend towards the equinox and work the patch named 'St Philip Howard.' The sky is sheeted, grey-mauve. He feels the weakness enter the plates of his feet. The charge in his bone marrow sustains a field of deformed mushrooms. He can scarcely climb this humble calvary and trim the toes of the wooden Christ.

This day's alfresco lunch pushes his confidence to the point of risk: to rest with his back on the pyramid, St Anne. The buried brain. The power socket. To swallow the can of mud water is difficult. The greasy fish twitches in his throat. Salmon Lane flickers into white fade as they return.

By the end of the afternoon he is done. And can scarcely get the bike home. Feels/understands the true distance of this journey, the pain trail. Cut-out mechanisms are inoperative. He sees every yard. So the idea of viewing Murnau's *Sunrise* is shelved. As is the scheme, already in motion, of walking the flare-path of Hawksmoor's churches by night, in company with two others; taking drinks in the appropriate cellars and rat-holes (Old Horns, Balls Brothers, Carpenter's Arms, Seven Stars, Ten Bells, Blade Bone); flash-bulb photographs to burn a dark halo around the necklace of shrines. This outing projected for the ninth day. Sumerian time of sackcloth and ashes. This was the overload.

And what occurs is seen as sunstroke. A total collapse. Water stomach. Weak head. Fever. For two days, sleepless; his body his bed, vertebrae a cage of burning wasps.

Then the dry thunder, the club shaken, and he can climb out of the nest. It is the ultraviolet knife that forces him to confront the part of him that is Robert Louis Stevenson: 'thin-legged, thin-chested . . . light in ragged luck.' Consumptive skin flares. Unnatural fires glowing beneath the cheek. The whole horror colour range – as with that night of chocolate-cake cannabis, when cosmic ironies stretched into coffin draperies, and his companion vomited: ritual death-

mask. The Jacobite left-handed ahrimanic gruel-water magicks of Caithness are upon him. He crawls out, on the third day, shaded in straw, a photograph of the last months of D. H. Lawrence.

On return to the work sheds the men laugh – sunstroke in London in August? But the magnetic storm does confirm that ultraviolet diagnosis. The sunspot code has been activated, the radio message of the Ripper. A time of open wounds, when the clouds of protection are pierced, and the gas blanket wears thin, when 'one lifts a flap of paper to discover both the human entrails and the starry heavens.'

August 1885 found R. L. Stevenson in Dorchester, aiming at Dartmoor, for health, renewal from stone source – but collapsing in Exeter (New London Hotel). August 1887, his health again in balance, Stevenson shipped out, Tilbury, on a freighter (the Ludgate Hill) for America. The last instinctive search, on a Sunday, was for a copy of Hardy's *The Woodlanders*, to carry with him. The narrator discovers these facts in Dorset. He has one book by Hardy in his cupboard. It is *The Woodlanders*.

The whole fever condition is stained with the pus of the Stevenson figure. Stevenson is insomnia; the wall-prints of an exhausted brain. Hollow words echo, dream quotations: that he has to 'swallow the world.' Dreams suffused by 'a peculiar shade of brown, something like that of a sealskin.' 'Afraid of the clay soil.'

What does he think is the governing process here? It is a total sun surgery. He is now post-operative, convalescent. With a taste of metal in his mouth, the iron of Los. He blinks from the daze and illumination of shock treatment. There are brilliant images on the borders of consciousness, but they cannot be replayed. The spine shivers from the electric couch, sensitive to the unspoken word. A confusion of tongues and radio voices from deep space-time: the dead speak too fast. A sense of genetic bombardment. As if the

pattern of chromosomes had been remade; the DNA dial spun recklessly. This is a laser lobotomy – actual major character assassinations worked by sun knife. Jekyll dreams, Limehouse nightmares. The germicidal push. All the bacteria of body light have been boiled in malarial blood heat . . . the Swedenborgian distinction between the spiritual sun (Love) and the material sun (Heat), Blake's 'sulphur sun.' The conviction that death is the cure. That life is a disease, living is disease, is active. Death is a bath of ice. Is the water he now wants, so indiscriminately, to drink. The cure is a piece of death. Death cures the body; its furious nerve pulse. The pages of skin are dried upon hedges. This is cosmogonic surgery: way beyond his control. The patients are not individual, are a strata that curves through the alternating times of the earth. They are beyond the simplistic butcheries of tower-block hospitals, secret hotels. The thing is Mayan. Connected to the shape of the essential building, the star tower. Executions (release) are multiple. Each heart torn free from the body case is reunited in the sun. That the great tribal heart should beat. That the sun continue to burn. So we 'volunteer', are generous victims, with Divine Light grins; placing ourselves in the open air, bare-necked under naked skies, away from the safety of the enclosure. We offer ourselves to the equinoctial sunbeast; so that it does not fade, or turn away from us. That its potency is held. That it climbs from the thawing earth into the heavens. Risen arch. Light maker. Promised feast of gold.

Surgery takes effect, what remains? We stumble into the realisation of a *doppelgänger* principle. The feeling was already present, of a secondary personality developing, Ka assertion, inhabiting this body shell. 'Not quite myself today;' I am host to motivations that cannot be understood. Stevenson again: '. . . and now suffering from what was loosely diagnosed as malaria, he had convinced himself that he had *altogether changed into another character.*'

As the ego breaks I am host to another being, who pushes through and not with the pink tenderness of new skin – but

with old flesh, hard as wood. The earlier 'I-do-not-know-who-I-am' virus is confirmed, as this terminal caricature eases out of my face. His disease ratio is speedier. He is further down the slipway. He offers suicide cassettes, seductive quest routes, film clips of Orkney death rituals: the whole horn pouch. He packages ancient horrors in mute jackets.

The wind is aroused to push back the hairline. So there is that shock, *Performance* retake, of seeing this thing in the bothy mirror, as he washes the earth from his hands at the end of the day.

And worse is to follow. Another of Anna's casually recounted, but vital dreams: that there are two creatures, one is her husband, the supposed protector, who is sitting upstairs in a wicker chair, while the other, also with my face, kicks down the door. Hyle is straining his collar.

He thinks of the churches as instruments of surgery, himself as golem, invaded by the planetary beams focused by these pyramids. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* formula. Disease is the means of inter-galactic mutation. The germ is Martian. We are invaded by a virus bearing the message of the stars. Cancer is star memory, misunderstood or opposed. Involuntary sacrifices are the hardest to make. These white conversations rip open the sluggish condition. Talk is faster than light. In the wake, the fouled wash, come the abortions: Scientology, Manson Hole Visions, the Process, Roger Corman. It is too ripe, too ferocious and sudden. He wants to bury himself in a peat bog, to sink in limestone caves for a thousand years, meditating on Conan the Freebooter.

But he has to consider the pyramid, as cause. He attributes this church to Selkis ( ) one of the canopic guardians, scorpion-goddess, identified with the scorching heat of the sun; shown as a woman with a scorpion on her head. And this is illustrated later – September 4 – at Stepney Green School, when old Bill Gates, the tea-maker with the ruined

feet, came out, for the first time, with the school-gang and actually spotted (or caused) a scorpion on the path. We were sitting, dimly, on the grass verge, 'taking a blow,' gazing with dead eye at the talismanic arachnid as it crawled towards us. Bill was the instructor: 'That's a scorpion, you watch when I touch 'is tail.' Which he did, the prong arching fiercely back. And we accept this verdict, do not struggle with its meaning.

One of my proposed companions for the night walk did not escape the word of the pyramid either; was opened to receive the appropriate message. He got a varicose vein on the male member.

The sun tho' must be the final agent in this parable; must be given, even here, its fee. Remember that 'Cleopatra's Needle' is, in fact, the obelisk set up by Thothmes III in front of the Temple of the Sun at Heliopolis. Consider its relation with Hawksmoor's twin obelisks: St Luke, Old Street (church decayed, obelisk standing), and St John, Horselydown (reduced to a mere rim of brick).

We are standing, in this cantref, on the path of the procession of the sun as narrated in the journey of Los. Los/Sol works that reversal into the infinity of mirror space: west to east, from druid burial heights at Highgate, beyond the Parliament Hill tumulus, to the Isle of Dogs (Anubis/Leutha). Blake himself suffered when he took his outings upon these local hills: pain begins at the Angel. He crossed the river to the groves of Lambeth. We honour his route.

Los works his surgeries upon Urizen, the calculating intelligence, harnessing the dance of sunspots, '. . . till a Form/Was completed, a Human Illusion/In darkness and deep clouds involv'd.' That Reason be cut into, bound, reforged, charged with wild light, ionised. Our mummer shadows recall this great archetype pageant. It is all there in the book of visions.

'. . . pale stood Albion at his eastern gate,

Leaning against the pillars, & his disease rose . . .
Upon the Precipice he stood, ready to fall into Non-Entity.

Los was all astonishment & terror, he trembled sitting
on the Stone
Of London; but the interiors of Albion's fibres & nerves
were hidden . . .'

READING IN BED

the sights and sounds are muted
the text also became *un film noir*
as dreamt
with all the multiple complications
ironies
& shifts of meaning
variable typeface
the horror was what he got right

it was comfortable
afternoon bars
fire in the Carpenter's Arms or
working hard at irrelevant cellars
'dignity in the last goodbye' never
'money, embarrassment, paranoia' is closer

the secret routines are uncovered at risk
& the point is
that *the objective* is nonsense
& *the scientific approach* a bitter farce
unless it is shot through with high occulting
fear & need & awe of mysteries &
does not demean or explain
in scholarly babytalk
it is always wisest not to
speak ('Against Wisdom As Such') the thing

spoken exists in the world & again
takes on that street determinism & punk inevitability
of the pulped detective
knowledge/suicide

each clue interpreted
speeds the end
or marriage
if we should come through into the sunset
we will be sadder
criminals

Sickness Return

citizen is broken the sky is
incorruptible
immune to selfish pleas
'less to say'
becomes less to do
then it changes
& is changing & continues to change

his head is vulnerable
as the egg Yeats
speaks of
the rubber egg
continually turning
inside outside
above waves

weather frets them
giant blackberries gather the water
& are themselves gathered
thorns in the hand

all consolations begin here
where the image turns to sugar & we
retreat from the garden re-
tract the mood of lunchhour talks

return hurriedly from the graveyard
load the trailer
rubbish blows over
erases the enclosed field

drink we must
a well-formed stool
or the notebook shrinks in the hand

HANGED MAN/REVERSED

murderous milky calm . poisoned mother
suckles the dung flies
on ultraviolet inks
A C C I D E N T
sculptor spills himself on the tarmac
courts death
is accepted
that vaporous Long Man of Camberwell clouds

could the rooftop transaction
telescopic
superimposition of planetary emblems
at differing life speeds
have forced the butchered exhibit down the tube

the stars are fixed in their arrangements,
claims the madman,
they have filled him
with depressants, anti-
depressants,
vitamins, purges,
denied his vision as alien
& now the body breaks
teeth fall out, hives, weak stomach,
varicose vein on the male member
P R O H I B I T I O N

(wretched as Kaspar Hauser)
that the mind can no longer torture the body
that the mind should be free of these muddy chains
    he is mindless, a god
the star needle punctures all remaining ego
    enforced self-denial
keeps the pressure up, the clouds apart
plane spotters enjoy the clear mornings
british racing pigeons manoeuvre at speed
we eat too much icecream, too many saveloys

'afflictions induce Calliosities, miseries are Slippery'

THE IMMIGRANT, THE SENTIMENTAL BUTCHER

'life, / with a capital F'
Charles Olson, *Maximus, Letter 5*

ALL IMMIGRANTS, BUT in this web, in this net of ugly brickwork mosques and God hoardings, they are mostly Irish Catholic. It is there in their names, if not their voices: Pat Coyle, Peter Healey (new immigrant, via Yorkshire fish-dock), Joseph Rust, Charlie Leahy, the keepers, soft-voiced Dennis (who returns to the West for every holiday), and Johnny Cashman.

It is Johnny who remains closest to the root tradition, lives in the family drama and brawl and loquaciousness of drink, fights, monologues, jokes, vomit on the stone steps . . . a tribe of sons . . . has a solution to all the major political social and economic problems, Ulster: 'Now you take this Captain Eugene O'Neill, he was the best they've had over there.' Shuffling dancing music hall, or gaff, delivery; twitching at his lapels, flicking his cuffs, spilling his eye . . . keeper's hat, a jaunty prop . . . rambles of the mafia operations of local government . . . hard-men, fixers . . . he still has the priest-whipped childhood in church schools to bring up . . . was there with all the big local cogs and wheels . . . 'good old Johnny.' Behind this is the memory/legend of how the Irish were pushed into these boroughs, Stepney, Poplar, Wapping . . . suspects and villains . . . read the Ratcliffe Highway Massacre transcripts . . . forming their own protected enclave . . . having to profess an alien faith and culture . . . keeping out the White-

chapel Jews with boot and fist . . . A thick vein down into the life of the place.

Arthur is the odd man out, Arthur Vinton . . . Hugenot . . . the earlier Spitalfields immigrant . . . with that love of flowers and small birds. Cages in windows, bird-song, work ethic, green patches among brickdust shadows: Flower and Dean Street, Fournier Street, Fleur-de-Lis.

August 5/Monday

Arthur and I have the trailer backed-up to wheel the mowers down the ramp and cut the small patch of Holy Child – when Arthur spots an old-time friend, on his rounds, in a van. They talk back into narratives of shared days, we all rest on the pavement.

The most recent drama the friend offers is the Usher Road vigilantes – who have declared war on the squatters who are trying to plant a different culture in their territory. The street is already condemned, the families moved out to new flats and tower blocks – and certain groups of squatters have been allowed to use the shell of the buildings, without rent, by the local council: homeless, feckless, tough-minded, dopers, divine lighters, Sufis, on-the-roaders, professional anarchists, break-down cases, unemployed activists are here . . . tho' in the main it is east end families, or women with children, who cannot find anywhere, let alone anywhere decent, to live. But the indigenous mob won't stand for it. They work and they have devoured media fear. They break in with pick-axes and crow-bars . . . rip out the wash-basins, tear out the light-fittings, dig up the floorboards, hurl the cookers out of the windows, kick out the window-frames . . . crazy escalating excitements. Arthur's nephew has been one of these, a leader, arrested, fined – a fact that he only now discovers.

The flurry of hot images settles. They go back to the small birds and flowers, the pigeons they both kept; the dogs, their tricks. How the neighbourhood cats used to sniff around the pigeon

sheds . . . until Arthur's friend devised a cunning trap, a water-barrel with a pivoted revolving lid; when the cat stepped onto the lid, it spun away from him . . . dropping him into the water. Every 3 or 4 weeks the barrel would be tipped out and a dozen drowned beasts added to the compost. 'You do a lot of gardening in the evening,' the neighbours would remark, admiringly, as yet another pest-hole was dug. One big tom had been cornered between them, its skull flattened with a concrete-headed hammer. The warmth of those days, recalled: the laughter.

August 21/Wednesday

Afternoon at Sts Mary and Michael – where we have a friendly caretaker who brings out tea and biscuits – tho' on this occasion he is away, a holiday.

The grass is thick and lush . . . Arthur spots a goldfinch, then another . . . near nestlings hopping about . . . the mother in attendance, watching from a tree. They are almost able to fly. Involvement, suspension of all other activity. Joe and Arthur talk of their own caged birds, the Club Row stratagems, painted sparrows. The training of song birds. They are tempted to catch and keep one of these, but aware that it is forbidden. A traffic warden joins the disçussion. Arthur tries to help with the flying process. He picks up one of the fledglings and throws it at the tree. It falls, he picks it up again. Then the other does fly and Arthur and Joe share the excitement. It hops, strains, gets, briefly, off the ground. Sudden swoops.

We mow the grass. The thickness is cut back by the whirling blades. We switch to a different level of concentration. Arthur stays on the goldfinch patch, Joe does the edging. The job is soon done, ice-creams are bought, we sit on the wall.

Joe notices the first one: a goldfinch head – the small decapitated thing lying on the grass-cuttings, then another, then a third that has been cut nearly in half. Arthur feels the horror. The mother bird diving from tree to tree. The whole

year's tribe has been wiped out. We wheel the mowers back onto the trailer, and return to the yard. The day's work is completed and it is now that we notice the final bird, the survivor. It is on the trailer. Joe picks it up and puts it in his lunchbox. He stops off on his way home and returns the bird to the nest.

August 23/Friday

Cycle past the bus stop, St Anne, Limehouse – to lunch in the church grounds, and notice Francis Bacon waiting there, or rather standing there, seeming not to wait. Grey: grey shirt of pseudomilitary cut, grey trousers. We eat and then count out the 9 steps of the Osiris ritual.

If
the bodies
are empty, cloud
vapours are the spin
off dialogues; are
thicker than
speech.

We all adjust: over the stadium, the missing spire,
the half-circle of border ditch around Limehouse
keeping out the histories of Mile End, Ratcliffe,
Poplar. Laneways weighed under different gasses.

The encroaching fen. The
speed of the time of the place
changes. Now I am frighted
in retrospect by a glimpse
of the original wood:
Hawksmoor's staircase
rising from the recently
sealed porch. Unvarnished
grain of parallel universe.
There is also Hablot Browne's
etching. Strong ground.
To be here is wide enough.

UNDERSTAND THE SPREADINGS OF THE CLOUDS
THE NOISE OF HIS TABERNACLE. Endure,

listen. At the mercy of cattle replays,
open fields. EGYPT – THE UNREDEEMED.

Today Arthur
called Charlie out
to witness a double-
rainbow. I remain
in the bikeshed,
finger pores
irreversably
black.

THE NEAREST COAST OF DARKNESS.

subdue all ego
(& rigorous eye)
into the unmarked
morning quality of autumn light

low sun sheathed above water

and the park is
an ideal
that has been there all along

PRAISE

the thick black shadows
south-east/north-west
the grooved trunks of chestnut
london plane
which is early century optimism

holds out
the street life hard channels
traffic ditches

the affair reduced to a pulse-stopped stillness
the urge is secondary to make note

interrupted
with instruction
in how to operate the tractor tilt

then back to a second breakfast
the *Mirror* the *Sun*
bad jokes Securicor pay-packets
four kittens newborn
pink leg stalks nested in moss peat

how to drown them
nylon stockings & a brick are favoured

no action
but the carrying out of milk for the mother

to work in good heart

though the 7.30/8.30 am light is beautiful
it is not the optimum time for grass cutting
the dewy grass covered with dogshit
that has not yet hardened
early bowel move-
ments & the rapidly spinning blades
flick the stuff deftly
over jacket neck face glasses
later the hazard is only on boots

clear eye
shadow companionship
each grass blade thickly inked in

the noise drowns the smell

tea-break in the bothy
old Bill totters back from toilet duty

hush-puppies
favouring ruined feet
mashes a pot of brillo tea

cheese ryvita tomato Homer

a mistake
that alerts the foreman
who launches into a glistening monologue
stratifying the *Aeneid*

the same old scenario faces us
of quarrels jealousies violence
meddling by gods
Son of Cronos
head-office bungles the bonus slips

nothing changes

the cat drinks her reflection
from the rain-puddle near the hopper
we chuck out the summer plants
Joe cuts geraniums at the joint
'chuck 'em all away the bastards'
orders the yard boss
the manager uses the landrover driver
to carry him to the doctor's house

asthma chest-cough nicotine
Election Day
soft persistent rain

inside the hopper
flower mash a fridge
on the lid a speedy
calligraphy & corrosion of painted signs

the keepers join the afternoon dig

& call a spade a shovel
& feint at a National Front vote (or 70£ bingo win)

bad economics
a fortune in fallen leaves
squandered
thrown away for tidiness
a fresh set of plant teeth

thinking back to my first visit (May)
& how this land has become familiar
& resolved
fitted to the pattern or come to terms

knowing hoping that the grace is
no state of clothing or appearance
or statement or dressing of language

but to accept & include
the distractions
the day-to-day breath & performance
the lies of the land
& nervous
scenery of the clouds
as these showers fall we must not
yearn again for sun only & the warmth
using ourselves
the supply
is diminished

a group forms
leaning on brooms
the boss-man is angry & coughing
his use of air
he is dying faster than the rest of us

nothing to forgive

the hormone advocate is resigned
& talks of Japanese gardens
the beauties of red & gold lacquer work
'the best years' of his life

stationed at Hiroshima & Nagasaki

foliage is persistent also
the rain-
gardens not much visited

money fear scents the ground
the prisoners
are not scared to death
pools bingo are the survival cassettes

behind the eye
gentle fantasies

otherwise it is a discipline without hope
of heavenly bonus
for necessity not reward

life given
to live

'& light but the shadow of God'

The Querent, at Home

the sun splinters in the high trees
it is local, a sign
& true source of october warmth
no hurry
how could there be
as the child stops to pick up a stone
to tear a yellow privet leaf
(my own, earlier, nervous habit)
not drunk any longer but last night's debauch
remains in the blood stream
how we flaked out on russian stout & cider
the sculptor collapsed in the street
& came back
the madman alone was calm
no
problem: a new tweed suit, a red shirt
bandanna
mother's gift,
social security cash jangling in pocket
is 'cool' almost
& considering a male model portfolio
tells jokes
gozitan cigars knock me down
the hairs on the back of my fingers
burn
the flesh chars

no pain the smell of
unoiled shish-kebab

in this morning sun I notice
my finger pads are gouged & cut
the sharp blade through the green tomatoes
the onions the green pepper

no pain no blood
so we feel inhuman
& dream of blood cancelling pregnancies
don't quite understand
the manipulations of time
but read about them

this eyot
the privilege
of the streets

'there are still enchanting enclosures, such as
the little group Albion Square, Albion Terrace &
Albion Drive, with fine public houses, the
Duke of Wellington & the Brownlow Arms'

claims Arthur Mee
in *London North of the River*

the season the walking
out
the child
finding pleasure in simply
treading the grass

put down the elements
a bowl
against darker times

here: Hackney South & Shoreditch where
Mr Robin May polled the National Front's
best result 2,544 votes

mechanistic
sanguine

cloudy engine

love
moves the sun

breaking away from
to write
breaking deeper
towards it
the spread of mist
across Victoria Park

seen in nature
as in
a thousand
Hammer horrors
or Mario Bava

but this is moments after sunrise
a moistness
a chastity over the lake

opening up the toilets
becomes a pleasure
he gapes
at the sky
flight of birds
rain belt gone over

sharp focus
flight of five
high against the bony elastic of the cirro-stratus

sunlight flashing on wing tip
all these energies
aligning ne/sw
corner to corner
across the envelope

the fire ball lifts
burns the eye blood
cornelian ecstatic over Burdett Road
roof silhouettes
lifts & arcs

the tightness
goes out of the sky
smoky vapour to cloud rust

the sun is gathering
a yellow alchemy
'swiftness, as that of an expired messenger'
push
of day reality

engines starting up
in the Borough Yard
camaraderie of the few men
stamping & puffing out
milky sleep breath

the work week opens
close the door
weather eye
for foreman
snatches of Homer

sky becomes porridge
'dispersed Seminalities'

THE FINISH, CONFIRMED

final day, poltergeist fury
locked wheel
oil spurt
eggshell razor
baby coughs blood

surely it can't mean
that 'they' don't want me to quit

impelled
towards high places
scree lake
field pattern in the valley below

as yesterday afternoon hoeing the water-jump
resting leaning on the pole
lifting to a vulture's eye view
of stadium & self
lifting
to the noise in a gull's throat
'not to quit'

can't be the message
more probably
some final exactment
blood money

what we have is brought/to live that way?

dream sorts out the tangle

a chaos of small guilts & anxieties

Anna sickens towards the new life
the frog-bud forcing itself in her womb

register these colours

ice tracks on the pillow
death

is every mother's prophecy
Achilles not specially privileged in this

egoic stubbornness driven in by blows

only the graveyard grows wild
where Ropery Street meets Southern Grove

his fictions oppose the rain
the 'Eezion' power-tool ejaculates oil

says Arthur with his usual
unexpected
perception

'I have an idea this is the finish'

RUNNING THE ORACLE

'It is only when the power of the passions is dead altogether, & when they have been crushed & annihilated in the old retort of an unflinching will; when not only all the lusts & longings of the flesh are dead, but also the recognition of the personal Self is killed out & the "astral" has been reduced in consequence to a cipher, that the Union with the "Higher Self" can take place.'
H. P. Blavatsky, *Occultism versus the Occult Arts*

'Punt's Establishment was a Moon God or a Magus of the White Planet, indicating that he was a white man. At least two shrines to Al-Mukah exist near Axum, one being at Yeha about ten kilometers to the south. Al-Mukah seems to have been the patron deity of the Island of Meroe & of the Island of Ireland.
His southern shrine in Meroe consisted of a small rectangular building about nine by seven metres. It contained cylindrical & cube-shaped incense altars and a bench which stood in the eastern part of the temple. On this bench, archaeologists found a votive plaque stating that:
two persons GRB have consecrated to the god
Al-Mukah the work of their hands for WRN.
The sanctuary dates from the fifth century BC.'
Winthrop Palmer Boswell, *The Snake in the Grove*

THE YEAR BEGINS with a rush of blood, pent-up force of work months, stored earth rhythms, cortical projects, margarine sentimentalities bleaching into 'vision' – breaking out now into road frenzy. A salty thirst for holy places.

He departs on the last day of the dying year, north: Ripon Cathedral, black moss castellation and furious wind, calmed a

few miles across country at Fountains Abbey, water park, false time zone, ruin. And the push continues; the new year opens on Holy Island, a meeting arranged at the arch, the bent bone of illumination, site of pre-birth manifestations. Totems carried to this place, twigs and pebbles; then the boat, Inner Farne, a dead rabbit discovered at Cuthbert's font. The second; the Valley of Desolation was first, Maiden Castle was third.

Where else; Manorbier, Peak District, gritstone, Dorset chalk dome, Glastonbury – his meanings. Pulling himself into thread and taking the whole horror in his dreams. He aims at tokens of the light: Year of the Rabbit. The fear of/the hope for children. Christian shrines therefore. And pagan hill sites. Confusion.

The local Lud-town calculations emerge out of body-block, low weather – can't handle the increasing speed. Receives Doug Oliver's *In the Cave of Suicession.* This is a large clue and description of what-is-going-on, unseen. The lust of the land. Dressed imperatives chisel their questions into rock. Also rips through, in a single sitting, Winthrop Palmer Boswell's *Irish Wizards in the Woods of Ethiopia* and *The Snake in the Grove*: crackpot, money-fed, post-thesoid truths. Another piece of the times to swallow. We are gathered again, intersection, return, barbarous friendships share the hospice, aim at the temple. So much has been cut away. We jitter and shake with a new confidence.

They have circumnavigated the Roman Wall, they have followed the Hawksmoor trail east, from Blake's grave and the glimpse of St Luke, Old Street, through the Rookeries and refuse laneways and streets of bird fear, the fen edge, to the place of the lichen-pattern on the grave, to the crossroads, the staked vampire pit, St George-in-the-East. Limehouse, twilight. Locked into the church, the girl is bearing a child, first weeks of life, and is exhausted from the walk, and falls asleep here, in the darkness, and dreams, while we stand at the foot of the wooden staircase – and she cannot, reasonably, face the continued journey down the length of the Isle of Dogs . . . hesitation at the Anubic border post . . . swirl of London transport . . . hope a

bus to the tunnel-head . . . under the river . . . Greenwich . . . Alfege . . . Hawksmoor's first and our final point. The hill the observatory the old palace . . . after the muds and savagery we climb . . . Maze Hill the light . . . General Wolfe's shrapnel-scored masonic marker . . . pulsing dome of stars. We would wish ourselves transformed. We would pursue this optimism to the last feet of the island . . . and with all the ferocity of a boar hunt.

His companions visit the Steiner farm; are about, this day, to depart for America, Lindisfarne Community, a study group on the Book of Revelation – as I am about to depart for Wales, Manorbier, birthplace of Giraldus Cambrensis, land held by Bledri ap Cadivor, Jessie Weston's candidate for Grail authorship. Late afternoon, suitcases, night drive ahead . . . and it comes on him to act out the oracle run. The idea had been there a long time . . . two days, a week, six months . . . the shrine uncovered by instinct and by calculation.

It has been told how the Hawksmoor churches yield the symbol of Set, the tool for castration and the instrument for impressing cuneiform script onto the clay table: he now calculates the central point of the horizontal bar of the T, the point of force, of maximum push. This is drawn out on the map, crudely at first, on a London A to Z, and then, more accurately, on the Master Map of Greater London. The point given is an epicentre of energies – and known to us already – from the walks preparatory to filming *Maggot Street*; the journey made in nervous optimism and open-air hope . . . returning to find the garden dug up, the hall, floorboards, bedroom . . . massive gas leak and potential holocaust.

The point is sited on the Northern Sewage Outflow, raised Ridgeway, slanting south-east, Crows Road, East London Cemetery, Saxon Road, running into the Thames at Barking Creek. But the shrine is at the precise spot where this secret route passes above the River Lea – the ancient English/Danish border, as ratified by the Treaty of Wedmore (878). The oracle-mark is also an extension of the arrow – where Old Ford Road

blends with Roman Road. That crossing place. The hurdle-ford of the east. The invasion path, the path of escape. From this platform we look down on Iceland Street and Autumn Street, we look across water and waste and nomansland to Stratford (Chobham Farm workday industrial memories) – the route of Los again ('thro' Hackney . . . towards London/Till he came to old Stratford, and thence to Stepney and the Isle/of Leutha's Dogs, thence thro' the narrows of the River's side').

He knew that it had to be RUN. This was a thing for total body exhaustion – 'annihilated in the old retort of an unflinching will.' He knew the route, in intimate absent-minded loss, and NEEDED the word – but as he ran he understood ('when revelation comes athlete and sage are merged') that all he would get this time was the sound of blood pumping in the throat, harsh lung – which he could interpret as oracular confirmation that this was the route.

It is raining, without intensity. He turns out of Albion Drive into Queensbridge Road, south, over Suicide Bridge, where the Krays offered their weapons to the water after the mutilation and death of Jack the Hat. He follows the thick green serpent jelly of the canal. Rain falls like lead shot, denting the surface; rings of opening and closing eyes. High flood level, the rush. Uneven cobble ground, back of the flats, garages. No strain as he runs, the idea is motor. A flame across his chest. Lung-Gom, is the aim.

Sir Walter Scott (rebuilt 1909) to his left; the urinal, to his right. Sheep Lane, old slaughter track to London Fields, the drover's pen. Ash Grove. And across the major traffic-ditch of Mare Street. Gore Road bends into Victoria Park by the north-west gate.

Here he is tourist to the circuit of Reg Kray's early morning constitutionals. There is the renewed energy of high elm avenues and the canal is his immediate companion once more. They are ringing the closing bell. Darkness covers his ritual.

False light. Shapes in the dusk shift and muffle the rhythm of his feet, his forced breath.

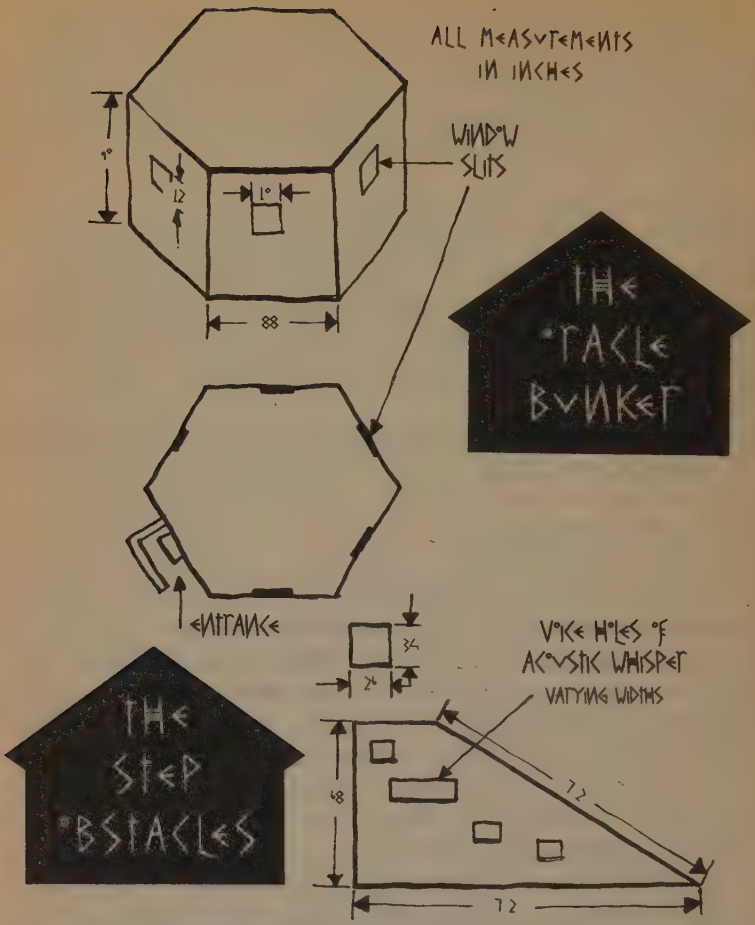
He passes the plaster dog guardian effigies, the Anubic warnings, twins. The lake is on his left, depth, muddy density, the concentration screen for the dipping consciousness of a line of gathered invalid carriages, convalescent motor cars, adulteries, first outings of the new born.

Out of the gate, holds for the traffic, the light stream, his eye open for Arthur's car, Grove Road. And on into the eastern segment of the park, the hunting grounds, the people's woodland. They are chaining the gates behind him. His chest prepares a question, over grass, over root bumps, wave-patterns in the soft ground; slight climb to Gunmaker's Lane.

He is entering the corridor of mysteries. It is out of his control. The wind in the tree grove. The canal is now dry. It has been drained. Banks of mud. And the smell of it. Objects in the mud. The rain hammering down.

He turns away from the park, climbs over the gate, twin globes mounted on pyramid plinths, out into Parnell Road. A tin horse outside the corner shop. They are returning to the flats. Gas ignition of tea hour. Colour fuse of television in high windows. Multiple repeated image and word. Connecting with the serpent. Wick Lane. Dips into a road tunnel. Bone echo, footfall. Concrete slabs, sarsen conglomerate. Climb above the abandoned building, the place of injections. And onto the raised way, the sewage outflow path . . . the grid of city lights . . . industrial flares. . . . Percy Dalton's Peanuts . . . The Safety Tread. Bursts towards the marked place, the ritual site . . . the last yards at full sprint . . . to empty the body of all resistance, to fall upon the ground-swollen ear pressed to the wet grass.

The building is a war relic, meaningless and abandoned. Grey machine-gun bunker with four related step-obstacles set across the track to the south. It is hidden in a thatch of weed and thorn. It is directly above the waters. Lea River to north and south. He



13 BETWEEN EACH OF THE
FOUR STEP OBSTACLES

listens. He drags his cheek against the pebble-dash. He wants the blood word. He circumnavigates the building, anti-clockwise, pushing through the wire growth. It is a six-sided enclosure, related to so many other high energy structures: the original Spittle fields . . . his dream, the old map of the city, hexagonal field on the hill rim . . . the fence that traps the Cerne Abbas Hercules giant . . . the sheep-pen that Turner locates in his sketch of Llanthony Abbey . . . the stock exchange booths in the bear pit. Feels for it, understands that it has meaning: does not know what that meaning is.

All this is darkness. He crawls, in the machine throb and thump and heavy chemical night, into the entrance of the bunker. Pillar supports. A chair. Urinal smell. Rat fears. Small window slits. No word; no word is, or could be, given. No word other than – a black workman passes along the outflow, north – no word other than the need for it. He is relieved of the tension of the block of the desire to run. Is eager to get out into the air, to turn for home. Pauses a moment. After rain, clear sky. The star dome is sharp above him. He knows nothing of the precisions and mechanics and movements and meanings here either. An ignorant man, ground-held, muddy in motive – he jogs back the way he came.

24/7/75: browsing in Tower Hamlets Library, late afternoon, low energy weathers and discovers item confirming heat of instinct in siting Oracle Shrine. A coffin, seven foot wide, excavated at Old Ford, 1867, 'of one piece of stone, the inside having been hewn and chipped out,' origin and age unknown, removed from the earth 'close to the old Roman Road, which was the high road from Middlesex into Essex, over the ford of the River Lea.' So again we service the dead, complete the stifled gesture, grasp at the arm raised in salute from the choked ground.

SUICIDE BRIDGE

A Book of the Furies
A Mythology of the South & East

Autumn 1973 to Spring 1978

offered to THE ENEMY

'When a Manic Depressive escapes from his Furies he's irresistible. He captures History.'
Saul Bellow, *Humboldt's Gift*

'Plagiarism, fraud, perversion by pun, by reversal of values & displacement of content, of above into below, of male into female, left into right, before into after – all these Freud saw as operations of the unconscious.'
Robert Duncan, *The H.D. Book*

'To seek mysteries in the obscure, poking into magic and committing eccentricities in order to be talked about – This I do not.'
Veronica Forrest-Thompson, *On the Periphery*

Intimate Associations: Myth & Place

HANDS OUT OF the entrails of time. Myths are lies. Out of the bucket. Retain those primary, first light, dramas of aboriginal creation: *getting*, how here, dew freezing on the corpse, the erected land hurling star-sperm into the sky's belly, a moisture snaking among the dust to make the shape of the creature who must grow into his own shadow, male, containing female, put flesh into the morning. It is the length of what remains,

'It was the Kid who came in there on me,' Garrett told Poe, 'and I think I got him.'
'Pat,' replied Poe, 'I believe you have killed the wrong man.'

death, unburied defeat, poison water despair of infected tribes, the dispossessed, then & now, the vegetal peoples made blind by brilliance cut out of stone: new gods with necklaces of corruption.

Which is the essence. The true flash. Of what myth is. Stolen from *The Collected Works of Billy the Kid* (Michael Ondaatje, Anansi Press, 1970). That death is not a period to the heat of the man. Even in the sense of closing the text. Most often it opens. May instead be, signature. It has to be there: but not necessarily the death of the protagonist. The story is wound out of his head, a pigtail set with razors.

The land the animal. They have a location which is charged

with an intense & continually reinforced personal magnetism, literally driven down into the granules of soil – so that each single grain is a charged particle of energy, forming a live carpet on which they stand & move, a cathode mosaic of infinitely detailed histories & archetypes. Past & present are coeval, equally radiant.

The birth flower is there & the distilled lights of all their suffering. They have Place made manifest in totemic animals, to be succoured & to be hunted, even to death; devoured, digested, taken back as the living body of what the tribe is. The circle is made: the nimbus, clearly visible around the standing shell of the man, is uncut. Demons of otherness cannot gain entry. But this is recklessly ploughed under, is cleared, transported; & Place which is their own darkest, unspoken, identification of self, is damaged beyond recognition & forced to find other, alien forms.

It does have to be very simple to work. Narrative. And contain much that can be repeated. Was heard (over-) somewhere else in the first place. The bones are painted down the front of the suit, in lime. Burn through. Poe, prophet seer of American guilt, is deputy to Garrett. Whose watchchain is bandage, not allowing the action to escape.

Pain is swallowed, with apparent ease, in tribal enactment. It does hurt: so much that it won't remain a mere irritation down the slope of the face & the inside of the skin. It shifts out. Lays hand on fate.

The essential myths of beginning are followed by myth as subversion. It will destroy the colonist, it will fatten in his cheek. He will haplessly pursue the past, will lie with ghosts, waste his essence on incubic shadowy movements.

Myth emerges as a weapon, a tool of resistance. It emerges in the hands of men wanting to maintain a contact with the previous, with the era of power & high function; men who know they must lie fallow in a time that is so distant from the plexus of their own unplanted sun. The memory fire

WALKING. WRITE THIS DOWN: KILL THE WORD. STIFLE ITS

must at all costs be tended. They code what is left & they speak it secretly. They do not put it on paper. When the trader & the metallurgist shave out the stone, carve the earth faces, the unplaced tribesman borrows the stories of his animals, sleeps close to the fire, listening to the breath of the herd. Dreams are back-tracked, names & symbols mated, cooked, released. It lies on the tongue like a grub. It climbs out of the book into a vertical energy called: FASCISM.

The need for the old myths is a confession of our failure to handle the world, to be on terms with the life-spill of this moment. We want back to what was never there. Immediate parentage is denied. Deeper & deeper into the sand.

Myth is breech: faces backwards. The Siamese twin is place. They are sown together & cannot be separated, dependent systems. Man is the messenger substance between them. He is a raised tube, opened at crown of head & base of feet – so that it flows through him, conscious or unconscious, the power, the surge, the tachyonic voltage. He is erect. That is his vanity, to lift skull to the shafting sun. The wiser animal, the ally, travels with the ground in a relation of mutual benefit, low over the force-lines, guided in his essential journeying. But man is like plant. He is utterly possessed by what place is. He stands where a precisely defined exchange is consummated between star & ground. He is the saline medium. He marks place with a stone. But he is not rooted. He moves away, inflamed, into myth.

Myth is the living breath of place; is life. Place, in travesty, ordains & invests man. He gleams & glistens like the new born, he is

The story told fresh in an historical present. Live newsprint. If such a thing were possible.

Centaur. Man horse.

Episodic. You can add & fill your own (needs). You can begin anywhere. You can set it to music. Or spit it as venom.

There are dogs.

mythic hero. The lives & virtues of many men, many cycles, are compressed into the one: Demi-God, Sword Bearer, Astronaut, or Suiciding Martyr. Place requires

Can you make it seem that he escaped the gravity earth. Kicked the lead. Can you.

that man become myth. A blood bond is contracted. A known place must hold within its definition, edge, the mythology of a known man. Blake tells it: 'PEACHEY HAD NORTH WALES.' It is a sex, a hunger. Man recognises his place by a lust in the skin, wants to go into the side of the mountain, come gold.

Make it seem there is a power detached from the facts of biography. It is all being taken down. But it won't be used.

Man needs, a blood cell imperative, continual extensions of place, extensions therefore of what mind is, extensions of boundaries, destruction of inhibitions & fears; always, more & more ground for the consciousness, & more consciousness for the ground. The colonists, getting-away-from as much as going-open-towards, have to push further & faster as space retreats in front of them, the known swallowing the unknown, the unknown regurgitating the known as something new: gobble it up, it isn't there. America, Africa, the Stars. Extending the metaphors of pain.

Where there is unclaimed space, unwritten land, there is the quest, & there is mining, a sickly clawing, not only for minerals, crops, dead artefacts, but also for mythologies. What tales the land holds buried. Drag them out with grappling-irons & tractors, record them. Hoard the images in mausoleums with chained walls & uniformed attendants.

What we walk is myth flattened into space. Its hide

There is a man naked with a gun-belt. Weals. As if the skin were spontaneously tearing itself from the bones.

Who reaches for the knife in his boot.

stripped & ribboned, the thong wound out. This is, or could be, the Third Virtue. Not the celibate, fasting life, the eremite in his rocky sanctuary, nor the life of the materialist, forced to the service of his own goods, over-stimulated into toxic inertia, but to reconnect with the migrant, the traveller of paths, in balance with natural forces, arriving at the sacred sites at the most potent, & only workable, season, aligned with star & animal, searching for the star that is buried in the brain of the creature he hunts, taking on the qualities of that creature by eating his flesh.

Do you recognise the man shot across his own meat. As being close to those other (unnamed) heroes who left the quest early. So it was? Failure.

So place becomes active once more & this is the purpose of the walk – to keep track open, to lay hand on the 19 stones, to bear witness. Place trembles in you. Long Man moves out from your chest. The traveller is not

EMBRACING THE NETTLE TREES. ALL THE FACES TURNED UP. ALL UP TO FACE WHATEVER IT IS THAT IS, ABOVE.

TO WEAR THE FACE ON THE CROWN OF THE SKULL. PULL BACK THE WIND HAIR.

WHATEVER MOVES ABOVE.

BENDING BACK TO HOLD BALANCE ON THE CURVE. WALKING BETWEEN HEDGES. IT IS THE HEDGE, THE TREES, THAT MOVE.

THE TREE GATHERS IN, ACCUMULATES. MAN PRESENCE ALIEN. DRIVEN IN HIS TRACKS, TO SERVE. TO LIFT. THE STONES.

MERE WORK.

the cultivator of crops or the butcher of domestic cattle. He is not dominated by a fixed concept of place, by boundaries set in scale to the geography of his own skull's cavern. Place does not go sour in his pocket or wither his sinew. He has escaped the fattening & over-informed vortex of centre where the city dweller, unravelled by centrifugal motions,

has fallen victim to a weight, an ever-increasing density of myth, a black hole shrinking as it enlarges, cancerous, in terms of mere landscape. The city swivels on its axis, the sky is buried alive, buildings grow into the clouds, we carry the pains of architectural ambition on our shoulders.

Beyond this (seduction) is a poetry of mind, self-reflective, 'pure.' Where the consciousness (voice) is forever aware of its own timbre & includes fault as a crucial constituent in the irony. Which is also comic. In a swift vein. Includes knowledge. Those entry keys punched & in constant play. Disciplined.

Leaves the reader breathless, drawn remorselessly down through the layers of strategy to a new awareness of condition/impotence, & all its attractions.

And this is what we walk: the shape of the gods. We burn, by use, their outline into the turf. Cerne Abbas & the White Horse of Uffington are data: or, again, the precise number of steps that leaves you above the hidden spring beneath cathedral spire. The longer paths are less obviously marked & found by the ethical tuning of your personal compass. The track is the heated spoor of our own ancestral animal-host: hare, raven, salmon, wolf, or boar, whatever lives in the recesses of memory bones – the goat withering to the fish that is swallowed & leaps forth from the queen's womb. Energies put on the most convenient diguises. This is how we imagine them, this is how we divide up time & make it bearable. The shape is defined, given linear borders – as it intersects with time. We discover what the shape is by being forced to describe it.

In this same vacuum corridor the great secret was preserved, the sun. Men of power had the stock of myth all along: they knew where the trapped body was buried. Sun, Helios, Ely. 'SKOFELD HAD ELY.' Helios, Hyle. 'HYLE DWELT IN WINCHESTER.' These place/men, named energies, sons of the White Giant, lepers from excess of sun wisdom, these excavators of grave mysteries hid the socket of their potency, the furred spider of life, sun lion,

yolking tawny beast, beneath vampire stakes, the rocks of Winchester & Ely, the Cathedrals. Chisels of partially initiated Masons constructed the trap, wound the forbidden lore into a maze of earth & water. We have to circumnavigate that heat, walk wider & wider out into the surrounding meadows.

Place is a harpoon of the specific & has no name. It is not anonymous in the sense of withholding its location but is unknown & discovered only by a charge as powerful as death – in death-moment or some other heightened absolute, birth, climax, murder (that false trail of secret savage acts seeking to pin down place by isolated sacrifice, undirected hand, ritualists of the locked room hoarding their pathetic equipment, chainstore magic kits & cheap cameras).

Place is shaved into a splinter, is tight as one wound

Myth's bullets. Trenching out the man. Eating larval galleries in the skull. Breeding. So the flesh dies. He cracks away, transformed. The vertical man crashes, is cut down. His sex seethes white, how, he is made female. Maggoty grubbing intelligences are in him. Invaded by unsuspected weakness.

The man who is named. Is myth. Who is accosted by death. Is not shaded into motivation. The inaugural force of will. Against the domestic, the shared. Against nature (other than his own.) Spits into the wind. And uses it.

or gash on earth's surface. Myth makes track in the hoofprints of place. Lifelong quest for that unreachable singularity – to be reborn, re-energised by touch, by mutual ecstatic recognition of place & self. Myth is what place says. And it does lie. It spreads a seductive field of pits & snares. You go mad if you try to pursue place through myth: your path will disappear over the nearest cliff. Place is fed by sacrifice of the unwary – though the truly innocent, those born to innocence, according to myth, survive.

Place, finally, can be only one thing: where you die. Your own clenched spine secret. The motor word, logos, scorched

into your chemistry; a sign on the ground that is yours & no one else's. It is the elimination of absolutely everything, nothing remains, distance is wiped out, a total renunciation of all you have claimed as knowledge up to this moment. Your whole journey has been to find that place which you have dreamt, long before birth, glimpsed, snatched, visited – to find it & complete the story, which is the suicide bridge, which is the anticipation, sleep's rush on death, the forcing, the entry to something that is not yet, cannot yet be, known.

The wrong man steps through the empty grave like a door. The shadows of a timber house a heavy oil across his neck. The mountain is blue & you can see beneath the crust. Exposure/eye affected, shooting out of the slow dark, out of the palaeozoic into the astral. Fever shake in the rock. The use of man to stand between. They can call his presence 'love' if that is what they want. His purpose to conduct this transaction. Without him the system will wrench itself apart, ultimate density & ultimate light rejecting each other, travelling, where no contact can ever again be made.

A Cosmogony for Hand & Hyle

1

'The 17th ray is that of the twins; in the African cults the Ibeji . . . were the shadowy companions of twin children . . . The tempest, Oro, also belongs to this ray, which is that of ominous appearances & screaming winds. Upon his feast day Oro appears in the shape of a monster in human form with face & lips smeared with blood. His bellowing resounds in all the cities, & the fetish priests celebrate his mass in the groves sacred to him. The terrible voice of Oro is simulated in the Mysteries by the rapid twirling of a wooden clapper attached to a string'
Kenneth Grant: *Cults of the Shadow*

hear it, mantled air divides like a skirt

look down

space-time, M
gravity, g

causing light,
the life rush,
rattling, streaming,
mountain reflector of leaf & small stone,
to deflect, bend inwards

no light escapes the surface
these great black suns
invisible gravel pits of time

'a region whose boundary decreases to zero'

singularities occur along the edge
the birth, the notice, of Hand & Hyle

'causality breakdowns in that
one could travel into one's past'

and so the observer,
the floating, detached cone
sees the formation of antimatter
sees the centre darken, the dark ring spread

until the whole ceases to be visible, discrete
THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT IT IS NO LONGER THERE
it is there,
but the centre has lost definition
has lost its centrality

it is seen that the centre engrosses,
engorges space;
the eye ring is forced
to lead consciousness outwards,
stretch the event horizon

unnoticed,
these suns, these pits of distortion
but with retained gravitational field
visible only by effect,
the turning of light in its purpose

shock waves,
possible sources of x-rays, radio waves,
voices on cheap transistors whisper
the annunciation of Hand & Hyle,
mixed with roar of coal gas, diesel traffic,
the engines of annihilation

amateurs of obsession spool the tape-loops,
oracular static, voices out of time,
dead star ramblings,
the force
that shrinks the walls of forbidden buildings

'the area of the boundary of a black hole cannot decrease with time, & if two or more black holes merge to form a single black hole, the area of its boundary will be greater than the areas of the boundaries of the original black holes'

fear: time

prisoner of the sharpened future cone
its narrowness & helmeted peak

space, the guardian element, presses
contains the pressure of evil
and, thus, is itself contained

'orbit of the Killing vector'
old question: is there death before life

M.D. cut it into the accident elbow
of his glass, his black keyhole
refined into inertia
                it was found
among the grinding mills, the cones
        a pattern
presented to him, trace elements
of the dying molecular equation
fuel'd his insight, brought his own decay
        the magnitude
of what he could not see

between the eye & the intention: horror

'for small bodies, self-gravity can be neglected & the degeneracy pressure will be balanced by attractive electrostatic forces between nearest neighbour particles arranged in some sort of lattice'

this descends, is forced down
on the neck of the city
is guided in by the grid of the churches
is homed by 9th degree rituals
by the promise of Mass Murder
by the ovens
the opened veins of Whitechapel
surgeons inject the dust of white dwarfs
into the throats of will'd victims,
the cab jolts over the cobbles
shaking the stars in the window;

it is described by Rimbaud, years before the event,
swallowing the rod, writing with glass finger

'the vehicle turns on the grass
of an obliterated highway: & in a blemish
at the top of the window on the right
swirl pale lunar figures, leaves, breasts. . .'

the sick moon of Hyle is dying, that Hand be born

shedding matter, supernovae, planetary nebulae
activating heat to work the nuclear reactions
heavy gasses
white dwarf remains: the aura, the nimbic ghost

shadowy Hand rigid Hyle
falling out across the tumbled courtyards

time does not reach them, the red shift speeds

the ceiling of their death forces the father
deeper than ever into the mother's shame
shuddering, giving up his future
that they can be
that they must be, born again, anchored
to the fate, the corruption, of his island city

The quotations are taken from 'The Large Scale Structure of Space-Time' by S.W. Hawking & G.F.R. Ellis. (Cambridge University Press, 1973)

2

'An elemental is another of the creatures of the astral plane, which has many inhabitants beside the dead. It is populated by all sorts of beings, whether of human or independent origin – the gods, spirits & demons of outworn creeds & primitive beliefs, the astral bodies of animals, the astral simulacra of celebrated characters of fiction & legend, like Hamlet or Robin Hood, into whom sufficient human interest has been poured to endow them with long-lived astral existence.'

Richard Cavendish: *The Powers of Evil in Western Religion, Magic & Folk Belief*

waking to become their own fathers,
sickle-handed, wolf-toothed to tear,
dribbling fetid, seeping acids;
grainy root juice
to burn & sizzle, to hollow out
the bone of dark:
the beginning was Mouth, & Mouth
was sealed, without knowledge of itself,
its separate, future parts, welded

'they form the foundation of the New Sexuality,
. . . combining . . . to form a magical art –
the art of visualising sensation, of
BECOMING ONE WITH ALL SENSATION,

& of transcending
the dual polarity of existence
by the annihilation of separate identity through
the mechanics of the Death Posture'

they have, they have
eaten the heart of the scattered child,
they have eaten his heat
for their pulse;
it is the unstopped bug of their time;
insect, hard shell, devours insect
swallows the spiked tail, smaller
with each bite the motive shrinking

repressed spirals fill Hand
Hyle is dark, the basis of mineral life

they copulate with their own fist, sin
against man & against animal,
lie with crocodile & bear, consume meat
dung, crow, sperm, slime,
frog, earth, fen, rock
bring forth hybrid mind forms
genetic double-takes, hundred-headed
monsters & masks of naked greed

swollen & reduced they tumble
around the circumference of the wheel

mountain mad, dividers;
from the animal comes the divine,
to get out of ourselves,
possessed by what is swallowed,
milk teeth chip on stone & ring,
skull splinters chewed,
the avenging eye sucked down & held

Zagreus, Manson, Loki

disguised as woman to pass among women,
torn apart by their own mother:
courtesies & sentiments
of net curtain living rooms, wool
on the television cabinet, framed photographs
enshrine the dead child, tinted
bleached into a frieze of guilt

beyond the human into madness:
the restrictions of surgery,
rods in the bone pull free
he lurches towards us
with open kneecaps, gristle in the teeth
feathers his madness,
    the feather of flame,
out of it,
    into
the space beyond his father, sky

balance; balance on the raft,
the wafer of stiffened clay
between the fire pit
    and the retreating
reasoning warmth of stellar memorials

incubus, succubus;
Seth bearing the risen Osiris on his back,
sodomy, the rape of child Horus,
revenge, anger concealed in shell face,
this is Hand & Hyle, one creature
stumblng forward, weighted back
self-penetrated, blocked, death fertile
translated into medieval cathedral stone

Ahriman & Ohrmazd

'the material world & finite time
had been made by Ohrmazd as a trap,
to lure Ahriman from the eternal into the actual'

fitted up, framed,
fitted the hand to the glove,
Hand within Hyle, disguised, double-eye
breaks the stare of gravity
star// the grave of light
night// the graveyard of the stars

'EVIL IS THE ACTIVE SPRINGING FROM ENERGY'

Bone-muscle

HAND & HYLE, ASCENDING: NARRATIVE TRACK

'THUS ALBION SAT, STUDIOUS OF OTHERS IN HIS PALE DISEASE, BROODING ON EVIL . . .'

HAND & HYLE, shards
of Sumer, washed ashore
178 Vallance Road;
beyond the brick fields
to build a crimson-lake dynasty
of iron & blood knuckle:

'dividing the space of love with brazen compasses'

HAND & HYLE, their disguise: sons
dutiful & hating women
who could trap
and bring forth children, their own assassins

'preferring unnatural lust to normal practice'

HAND & HYLE, damaged, kundalinic,
swallowing the serpent
down to magmatic halls
coupling with beasts
in fire-orgies of mud & slaughter

'at will contracting into worms or expanding into gods'

nerves aflood with molten metals
hog faced, shaved, order
the ghetto run on closed rails

spieler opens its throat
the Voodoo Chile voices push them over

'aggression can be generated by material scarcity – anxiety by accelerating social change – psychological tension by contractions between economic power & status'

cooked, the zygotic drama
twin ribs break
uniform heredity pattern

the way back is savage, & quite outside
the protection of any library

to recognise self
under his cowl of flesh
who is which is who

the structure of the head
is become a helmet
red shift: as
face drags against the enfolding lips,
forward, last supper
at the Old Horns, Bethnal Green

beside the slatted barn,
gearpoint
in the nest of corpuscular magnetism

just beyond the geomantic limit
of the projected, the floating basilica

6 am arrest: cardiac

climb the hill

the breadknife goes in below the eye
opens the stomach
through the windpipe into the carpet

flesh disposal, ritual feasting

'A BUILDING OF ETERNAL DEATH, WHOSE PROPORTIONS ARE ETERNAL DESPAIR'

the stone vest no protection
Hand's cutlass slashes through
Hyle picks his spot
and breaks a knuckle
the light is in
room built vortex
no defence crack window
the hat falls Hyle's knife
grinds against the shaft of bone
where the eye-fish rests
no protection but it does connect
the buildings are bolts in this vest
only a giant can wear it
and bear the pain

'SOUTH STOOD THE NERVES OF HIS EYE'

nobody has spoken yet; Hand
will never speak. Hyle can whisper
    you may
tap his throat: the cards
are vibrating softly
                as he moves.

it is not all despair, Horus
finger to lips
marks the corners of the door.

the dome of the station
is comfort to many; particularly
those who are passing through
'*proleptic*,' said one,
of the taxis.
the dry mailbags are stacked here
like artificial sheep,
& these are mummified by the pulsing
electric heat
of the shape of this building:
by the frequency of the light strips:
by the funeral-bar songs of tape.
no human voice:
not struck upon bone or skin.
it is a music to soften death
for those who await a planting.

the canvas over the gravehole
is an unerected tent,
expecting the faint excitement
of a corpse lay; the excusable
blush of worm bulbs.

heat is minimal. we have to think it.

'HE FORGED HIS HEAD & TAUGHT HIM TO READ THE LETTERS THAT ARE INSIDE'

Hand & Hyle at home

theta-driven
never knew the alpha waves

the blue spill

learnt from the ferocity of plants,
not living under the natural canopy
but keeping caged & potted specimens
in hot window corners
where they gave off a surly poison
of hate,
a tangle of solar lusts.

'affected Plantations of venomous Vegetables'

doted, like Cato, upon the cabbage

then hit the dice & came up with indeterminate meanings

one sequence ran:

ACE/ACE/ACE/QUEEN/JACK/ACE/ACE/QUEEN/QUEEN/JACK
ACE/KING/QUEEN/JACK/NINE/ACE/ACE/JACK/TEN/TEN
ACE/KING/QUEEN/JACK/JACK/ACE/KING/JACK/JACK/NINE
ACE/KING/KING/TEN/NINE/ACE/ACE/QUEEN/QUEEN/QUEEN
ACE/ACE/JACK/TEN/TEN/ACE/KING/QUEEN/QUEEN/QUEEN
KING/KING/KING/QUEEN/JACK/KING/KING/JACK/JACK/TEN
ACE/JACK/JACK/TEN/NINE/ACE/KING/KING/KING/NINE
ACE/ACE/KING/QUEEN/TEN/ACE/KING/JACK/TEN/TEN
JACK/JACK/NINE/NINE/ACE/ACE/ACE/KING/JACK
KING/TEN/TEN/TEN/NINE/KING/QUEEN/QUEEN/TEN/NINE

strange rituals for a potential mass murderer

(1) 'voices'; the hole (or plague pit)

(2) church pinnacle electromagnetics

(3) mesmerism, Borley Rectory

(4) table-tapping, Conan Doyle

(5) Besant, Ouspensky

(6) Peak District oracles

(7) West African sacrifice cults, wind worship

consulting the scapula in flame
as a map of action

the dots & cracks as it splinters
marking out the sacred places

'he was now past the healthful Dreams,
of the Sun, Moon, & Stars in their Clarity
& proper Courses. 'Twas too late to dream
of Flying, of Limpid Fountains, smooth
Waters, white Vestments, & fruitful green
Trees, which are the Visions of healthful
Sleeps, & at good distance from the Grave'

DUPES

KOTOPE:
THE KNITWEAR ANAGRAM

'A Jew stole the grail the first time
And a jew died into it
That is the history of Britain'
Jack Spicer, *The Holy Grail*

Kotope was thick with self-love
(despair, despair)
and when that was used & exhausted?

the City, wealth
a casting of high diseases

defiant ghost pornographies
accosted his office-hour meditation,
unclean beast defilements bringing no correction;
humble clerk, with savage ambitions,
odeon land-dreams, born in the half dark,
the moon a bruise in his waistcoat
(control, control)
not easily expurgated, or worn down
they walk towards him, stretching
that cage of lines
they brand his forehead
(Cain's blood)
he suffers at his desk in man-made fibres

Kotope will climb above this
potential salesman, quits
the Road; chained to his room
& Mare Street Public Library
discovers the priapic masturbator godhead,
prophet, holy fire cockshot,
stuck with run of belly beard, gilded, rears
into folds & blind rushes, oracular woundings,
one of his own tribe, inspired publicist:
is led further – to Peachey

cabbalistic secrets of power
THE FRUSTRATION OF DESIRE
hold it in check, inflame it, work it,
until the spring breaks loose
in some totally unpredictable quarter

(cell burst, trembling pavements)

he writes letters ('Forgive me for troubling you,
Dr Jung, but I have been thinking about what you meant
when you said . . .'); wields an empire
of celestial velvet, lightweight
suits, mohair madness
of morning telephones, Fair Isle conspiracies

(Hokhmah, Father Adam betrayed)

'Mammon, the least erected Spirit'

KOTOPE:
DOWN THE CLERKENWELL CORRIDOR

'This art also visits the houses of merchants. They too can be found ascribing their successes in trade to the magicians, but reverses to . . . failure to make all the proper sacrifices.'
Philostratus, *The Life of Apollonius*

'What about Cathars?'

the question is slanted
across a brown & gold video-playtank

his bearded assistant's preserved smile
ruins his skeleton:
this deformity grinds beyond the grave

the wool-sweat Magnus, tame poet-man, gasping, brow-
mopping,
wreathed in pipe smoke, illusions, smouldering, skull on fire,
brandishes the fortune-casting coins,
takes the *Book of Changes* from the shelf,
feeds the fish & waits for the weekly envelope

'on the payroll': shivering corrupted sleep

Wilson, a philosopher of the keyhole,
comes forward from Cornish exile;
turkey smirk, a ferrotype, clubman,
knitted claw of tie:
'MAN WILL BE GOD'
evolutionary rocket theory,

man stretching to discover his potential

(shakti) the worm rises,
a good theory for worms

the court is at quest, witnessing
'unbelievable' guidance of the hand,
surely not random,
searching for the link
Pound/Cathars
that place? Mont Ségur

no reference Davie (*Ezra Pound: Poet As Sculptor*)
no reference Dekker (*Sailing After Knowledge*)
must be Kenner, no alternative,
flip open the great black book itself
& immediately confront:

'O Anubis, guard this portal
as the cellula, Mont Ségur.
Sanctus
that no blood sully this altar'

Kotope is not amazed, that smile,
the head turning,
minions have to react: awe
a magician,
this is it, & Anubis too
the jackal-headed one,
guardian of the mysteries
so lightly approached

for Wilson a simple matter:
mind discovering its power potential,
what you need you get;
for Kotope, the Way

'The four altars at the four coigns of that place,
But in the great love, bewildered
farfalla in tempesta
under rain in the dark'

for the servants a Master
rediscovered

we must begin again: ROCK-DRILL

cross-section of the tree

the truth

grains of the Light
coming from under water

Kotope is forgotten, a messenger boy

mastery wounds the word;
it would be as great a thing
to read fully as to write fresh,
getting it down does not complete the process

Kotope is not amazed,
Wilson is not amazed,
the awe is our own

the old ones have been there, they have
suffered, & they said it

time is a fish bone, regurgitated,
the god plan,
we will surely
never become the god that Wilson claims

bend time & spring out
with the arrow

it ends as it begins

parachute down into the blue, the marble the sand
'if you go any faster you'll stop'

stop dead, split; the difference

2

Kotope, in fear, plunges through ancient systems,
his Rolls Royce Corniche cruises the eastern city,
climbs the path of hedgerow cures
with the window locked,
the heater fanning his ankle hairs

Saffron Hill to Herbal Hill
(spectre of Chatterton)
the domes of the city
hump him,
a spine running south from the Angel:
Penton Mound, Merlin's Cave,
Percival Street,
St John Street, Old Bailey, The Temple

crusade routes & masonic handshakes
cross-grip of bandage
fires of Smithfield
(the mould in the ground, the trapdoor)
retained slow drip of architect power

Mitre Court, Rahere,
St Bartholemew's Hospital

these enclosures relating back once more
to St Cross & Winchester

'mysteries
that made my heart
too small to hold its blood'

(know that they did locate the Grail,
that it was here & the stones are flushed with it;
the septic water of Holy Well cellars
prepares the pilgrim
before he moves out West, to where the Grail came from
& was again:
lifting, crown over Warminster, Bodmin,
diguised as sighting, in floating dull-sky moisture,
seen only when gone,
retrospective seizure of nostalgic terminals)

but this is all too specific
too active for Kotope

what he requires is something
that can be folded
to fit the pocket without a bulge

the truth is kept for the few

who speaks to the Great Publick
speaks to me

Kotope's movements are erratic & fear
sets in east of the money line,
say, Southampton Row/Kingsway, even perhaps
east of Charing Cross Road & Watkins Bookshop;
original memory plasm
lurks in fur shadows, eighties pogroms,
soft-core sentiment for childhood's ghetto, bountiful visits

curtail the past, spurn city food
no smoke, no dope, no booze,
senses deranged by their own appointment

'What about Gurdjieff?' 'Steiner?'
'Castaneda?' 'Eliade?' 'John Michell?'
'Borges?' 'Black Holes?' 'Guirdham?'

to speak is not to know:
'DON'T SAY IT'

Kotope stares at the lowlife,
a jugular twitch, something dirty
is under his nails:
he arranges for a small assassination
stays at home a week
& orders a pouch of Tibetan chants
a hand-set story by D. H. Lawrence
reissues a necrophile novel
sells a corduroy jacket, with matching boots

but under it, the obvious
mantle of paranoid tremble & rush,
is some peculiar blade of accuracy,
self-proclaimed Zen Master dishing out
sharp lessons,
re-aligning the collapsed Dunn's hatters
(by Secret Pyramid Mensuration)
so that they flee into gardens & harsh
sessions of ego-murder, so that
they turn face to the naked weather

'I am the joker'

and using, is used, whose own ego
must burn on:
invisible crabs
bite at his spine; invaded
the game is bitter
Kotope cannot withdraw

Hand & Hyle are waiting, it is
their city also;
THE GOOD FRIENDS
fronts St Anne, Limehouse,
the Meths-men cluster around the car;
he feeds the rusty mouth,
the book dealers,
the moth meat, they will not protect him;

beggars block his exit,
they revenge themselves
with unspeakable psychic headlocks

they change shape & place
with seagull & rat, no street is safe

Kotope in his wife's bedroom,
black anger, the children knocking at the door,
volvuline domestic estrangements

Peachey revenges himself, he will not die

how to find the path again, the Tao

no way, the gates close in his face

Ludgate, Newgate, Aldersgate, Cripplegate,
Bishopsgate, Aldgate,
carnage & mutilation at Moorgate

death is east, a sullen sky,
vision falls to the west,
dying sun is hooded, forbidden

Hand & Hyle triumph

to the crow, the spoils;
to the maggot the fat pickings of Empire

lepers in Chinese tweeds, syphilitic denims;
racks of cellophane whip literature
replace the Sufi scrolls; the watered miniatures
twist in back-room bestiaries

the back of the Hand: exile

Kotope, The Manner of his Dying: Six Arabs on the Doorstep

Sunday Morning:
the whitejacket
cargo cult servants
are locked out,
vitamin breakfast tray
already overlaid with full-colour supplements;
the au pair
has deserted misty Mill Hill Park
for the empathy buzz of speeding Northway Circus

temporary migrants spin north,
the fun seekers
hit town from St Albans & Welwyn Garden City,
in quest of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* & purple hearts

Kotope himself, in kimono, opens the door
& is facing the air, the grit flung by traffic,
star dirt, grass odour,
lowlife in all its manifold disguises

his assassins
they are changing from the ragged pyjama-
wearing barefoot *Wild Boys* out of Burroughs,
open sores on their faces, insect souls, hungry
with knives & glass tubes to insert in his ears,
into 6 Arabs in flower shirts & synthetic beagling tweed
taken from his own shops,
carrying bren guns,

Czech armament, howitzer, Mao book
and Kotope
at that minute crystal particle of time
divides his attention into myriad thousand
scattered fragments,
his roman candle consciousness
examines the detail of this encampment,
walls,
curbs, pillar boxes, florists, hedges, bugs,
stains the low clouds, smears the telescope
of Will Hay's observatory, slides the matter
of his rapidly declining intelligence
down the cusp of the dome:
his will
erects one final, animal, vision of the city,
his body its body, flying,
& is gone, thickens the carbon sheath,
melts
the Polar ice by one fraction of a degree

as the Arabs disappear,
fade
into shrub & path, the ascended colours gone
that his fear
was only able to conjure this sole & singular time

PEACHEY:
THE PAGE OF WANDS, REVERSED

'He hath leagued himself with robbers:
he hath studied the arts'

Peachey, the hit man,
shifts into pamphlets

(a ring of mountains about him)

his head-world so heavy
arm bends
falls through
the spatulate bones of his hand

an x-ray delicacy;

like the braiding
on an hussar's tunic, worn aloud

bowel movements
were the only clock he could trust
& ran progressively slower
as his diet thinned
to goat's milk & diabetic chocolate;
suffered the hammer
of phenylethylamine migraines

sponsored by Kotope's Menswear Mafia
(stone-eye telephone, speaks fish to the Wool Exchange,
buys imagery, dead power lines)

the stick-wielder, extended into blackthorn,
alludes to arcane practices
is reprinted in Regent Street, in glass
in coffee chrome, overheated
(to febrile convulsion); obeys the bugle

a violent trailer
reeling & burning between the skin layers

despairing Optographer

Peachey had studied the Coffin Texts
been early upon the Mountain
chanted THE HYMN TO OSIRIS, for his revival

Ah Helpless One
Asleep where I have found you
lying upon one side
Great Listless One
whose name cannot be written
let me lift your heart
your bones will I knit together
an end to woes
and end to sleep's heaviness
life's flame climbs through your feet
moisture mounts with your spirit
I have kindled you
Live Great One
let the sleeper rise
it shall be my house that avenges you
Horus will avenge you
Thoth shall protect you
your powers will again be visible in the skies
you will cause havoc among the gods
your father joins me
he calls out 'Come'
Live Nameless One
let the sleeper rise from his chamber
take up again the bull's proud helmet
let the scattered one be whole

it could not rest there; Hand praised him,
Hyle was not slow in honouring him with gifts;
the Old Ones were reverenced, the drum
made moist with the blood of virgins

at the 'Double R' steps forth Atum,
creator of the eldest gods,
malachite green Master of the Fires,
who moves through the space
between two serpentine circles, turning

he also was Peachey's familiar
steps forth in the smokelight, announcing

I am Atum, creator of the eldest gods
I am he who gave birth to Shu
I am the great He/She
I am he who did what seemed good to him
I took my space in the place of my will
mine is the space of those who move
like those two serpentine circles, turning

Peachey sweats in malarial excitement;
his confession, the inaccurate
study of the texts, the awkward translations,
sees Hand as Atum, wishes to raise his spirits,
miscalculated miles & centuries,
released the half-animate flood of demons
the cat-headed boygirls,
    the storm clouds,
cumulo-nimbus over the Chair of Idris,
frowns in horror as they drift east
to the pinnacles of the City
                to Tower Hill,
the unsleeping eye of the cauldron

Atum speaks plague on the followers of Peachey

on the Wilsons, Sprague de Camp, Hesse,
on the Blakean publicists, the boudoir astrologers,
'the Taozer babbling of the Elixir,' Amis the Elder
Gog garglers, Ripper tourists, transvestite druids,
zoo builders, Campden Hill tantriks,
Avebury photographers, stone thieves

may locusts fall on their heads

(about Powys J. C. – he reserved judgement)

horrible things, he whispered, in revenge
for the planners of Golgonooza

(Hawksmoor – he excepted)

thus spoken, it became

but not all; the tide, the diluted
sallow seed-wind of Atman secret Masonry
seeps out, is given, attention to the natural

removed from Newton's atomic chamber, calculation
the big flesh, elsewhere, ignored

'The spiritual is all in Whitehead's simplest of all
statements: Measurement is most possible
throughout the system. That is what I mean.
That is what I feel all inside. That is what is love.'

man measures his own span in the ground
Peachey died singing

HAND & HYLE:
DECLINING

'THEY DRINK REUBEN & BENJAMIN AS THE IRON
DRINKS THE FIRE;
THEY ARE RED HOT WITH CRUELTY, RAVING
ALONG THE BANKS OF THAMES . . .'

Hand's irrational
fear of yellow socks

the mustard optimism
scrambles up his nerves

(spews fear)

short-circuit emotions
flagellate his haemorrhoids

always the grey suiting,
the dark socks,
coal-blacked shoes & hair,
polished equally,
scalp & feet: a horror white

but he did, love & fuck
the pigment
of assorted headless bodies

tipped & insulted red-eyes
glow like coals of revelation

macabre décor:
the sofas puffed lemon

with the scented musk
of departed occupants

(Peace Maddipal Incense)

the ceilings splashed with shadows
(the dead talk, the dead gossip)
from coalite fire operas;
Gordons gin bottles, chicken sandwiches,
the racing page, binoculars
in a pigskin case
(like the 1922, privately printed, 7 *Pillars of Wisdom*)
no love, this man, for sun colours

& wore gloves of softest calf's belly
so that he should not be left without thumbs
in the ghost country
so that he could still cock
his well-oiled Smith & Wesson

'the politics of the world of spooks
is as random as
that of a Mesopotamian kingdom'

for Hand – more so

'INTO THE VORTEX OF HIS WHEELS, THEREFORE HYLE IS CALLED GOG'

the astra mantra: PHAT!

as the cat spits
so spat his woman
upon Hyle

she was mated soon
with the worm

another mounted ghost for Chingford

'THE VEGETATED MORTAL EYE'S PERVERTED & SINGLE VISION'

and that twitter came through
his phantom deaf-aid,
the crow chorus of the dead

ancestral voices, crossed wires,
the soundbox bruises his chest

these are thunder beings, black clouds,
& should not be here
their shoes conceal iron hoofs
gods of Sumer, sealed gods
of the night river,
the unassimilated
animal part;
claws under gloves,
bolts in the brain, mechanical
& superhuman, strength
like a curse

this is not courage,
a rictal malfunction
that scares the breakfast
out of all acquainted citizens

'they went without shields,
& were mad as dogs
or wolves, & bit on their shields,
& were strong as bears or bulls;
men they slew, & neither fire
nor steel would deal with them;
& this is what he called
the fury of the berserker'

a bulb of mana over their heads
hovering, butterfly of pestilence,
disease-phial, unbroken, hanging
in the breath of their mouth
the foul compote of broken razor-blades,
vaseline, offal, sheepshead soup,
copydex, panatella, gammon
the breath he exchanged
with his lovers, the street boys, day release
art school greasers, back passage punks
a 500 watt fear, crackling,
surgical spirit drips
from his tuber, his gearing,
the coarse-skinned onion heart,
glittering snow crystal

fumigate with juniper & corpse candles

'a peachy, clotted tide of sound,
gurgling back into the viscous shallows'

'TO JUSTICE BEFORE HEAVEN HERE UPON LONDON STONE'

arrested despair, pre-dawn thinning
of blood in its chamber, sleep cycle slowing

scorpic clyster, crabs on a sea-bed of
shale & sponge-rubber, foam
on the tongue, heated fast breathing;
car tyres, the long shadow of St Luke's needle
administers the Stemetil, the Largactyl,
the Valium, Depixol, Disipal, Mogadon, Warfarin

this calming panic, locking ram by horns to cuckold;
together on the couch of their father's loving

the disguised Rovers hauling in asphalt
smoke wheel, the blue, circle of seizure
cancels breath, bands the neck
Bunhill Row Flats, they are taken,
a splintering of early morning light,
the scorpion scuttles back into grave-mulch
the tattoo escapes from the ankle,
white stain flinches from
the leather'd touch
of Crime Squad's Tintagel tooling

the width of relief, a new road opening

'IN SELF HOOD HAND & HYLE APPROPRIATE
THE DIVINE NAMES, SEEKING TO VEGETATE THE DIVINE
VISION
IN A CORPOREAL & EVER DYING VEGETATION &
CORRUPTION;
MINGLING WITH LUVAH IN ONE, THEY BECOME ONE GREAT
SATAN'

prepuce-waistcoated, Hand himself
acquiring potency in the end,
talismanic & withered, red pairings
of his lovers taken
by Hand, non-verbal,
gloating, full-pocketed:
sucked for their salts of preservation

walks his territory
marked the boundary stones
as dogs do

Whitecross Place, Sun Street,
Apold Street, Pindar Street

the old power connections

Wilson Street

late-century messianic spasms

reels-in the Blake skein
the Ripper Museum, Bunhill Fields

Orsman Road (B.M. Ethnography Store
of Totem Poles, Ju-Ju, blood-soaked clay)

Whitmore Road, Hoxton Street, the Latter-Rain
Outpourings Revival

Green Man, birth-place, vegetable tunnel
and the magnetism jolts through
the spinal nobs, a hair-burning shiver
from the paving slabs
into the feet, an ice warning

Hercules Road, Baylis Road, the Cut, Borough
High Street, Newcomen, Snowsfield, Druid Street,
Tower Bridge, the Minories, Mitre Square,
Houndsditch, St Botolph, Gravel Lane, Wentworth Street,
Old Montague, Durward, Hanbury, Old Dorset,
Spitalfields, Lamb, Quaker, Code, the Earl Grey,
Green Gate, Blade Bone, Old Horns

of the Stars ground by his heel
(Billy Daniels, Sonny Liston, Lord Boothby)
in sand
at the ditchpoint
where the current flows fastest

to consult the oracle of the streets

black ooze of buildings
floods his eye

shadow draughts over the city
hills disappear under stone derivations

the light even now
burns through the skin holes

the egg of protection

penetrated by light tendrils
of other exiles

out of the range: 380/760 milli-microns

the dead have settled into the walls
(Nag's Head)
the empty chairs are occupied

a mouse gnaws the cigarette
that nobody has abandoned

the grey ones hang in cellars
hover over underground dug-outs

autograph the walls & sepulchres
chalk hopes for eternity

fog is pouring from his nose,
Hand is walking death

'HAND & HYLE CONDENSE THE LITTLE-ONES & ERECT THEM INTO
A MIGHTY TEMPLE EVEN TO THE STARS; BUT THEY VEGETATE
BENEATH LOS'S HAMMER, THAT LIFE MAY NOT BE BLOTTED OUT.'

Victims

SLADE & THE TYRANNICIDES

'I once heard that John Dillinger's cock was in the Smithsonian'
No One Waved Goodbye: a Casualty Report on Rock & Roll

FROM THE PEAK, from the purpling cabbage-leaf frenzy of god cloud, moving down, & close, voluntarily abandoning the detached patrician levitation of viewpoint: it is through the eye of the scryer we see the event, darkly, peaty milk thinning in the lens; long ago, it is happening. The blood-veins at stretch, frozen sap erecting the tree fringe.

Feast of Purification, February 1, sacred ground, ridged & hard; crust seals the earth heat behind Waltham Abbey: prepared ground, marked ground. The white emanations of the corpse of Harold, battle-felled, Earl-King, Harold Godwinsson, bitter in his crude empiric of survival, in his gaunt mythology of chainmail, skull stripped as if by parasites, he shines like a chalk saint. The thin shaft in his eye-socket is the periscope we use; root tendrils & fine hairs feather the wood, lift towards the informing sun. The ash-scalded tip presses on his brain nerve: the feather has flowered. Autopsy of linked metals, corrosion, treachery, foresworn impulses of wrist, water hand, error of history enters the chronicle, vows taken upon false bones: the rat sanctified. Harold's leather helmet is the invisible tent in which the meet is arranged, foretold.

What Arthur is to the WEST, Harold is to the EAST: his

acts an unclaimed leprosy, shifting yellow to brown, red to blue, purple to green, fungoid poison-cultures in the ground, white alkali, rings of expanding decay. The alignment of these two mythical graves, burial places of the twin'd heroes, saviours of the compass, 'A' & 'H', spear-crowned or gate-stanced giants, these gravel beds of English soil, mark the limits, pin down a force-field: Glastonbury to Waltham Abbey, where the light is born, where the light dies. Traps for the unwary, map-references for the unbodied spirits, victims of ego falter, hurdled blade-men. Partially roused syntax of the planchette board, stuttering in Streatham, or dragged out into the veiled lamplight, civet-infested parlours of West Acton. Vegetable shadows of Kensal Rise fall across bed-sitting-room tables; as Arthur Machen discovered, no escape from the maze of selfhood.

But now, by slow flume, by Lea River, has Slade abandoned his weapon: in marsh grass. Lonely snaking stride out of his cantref, the moulded plastic boots scratched by thorn, the overcoat heavy with burs; the death plains of electro-magnetism, generated among the stone teeth at Land's End, the surf force & tide rhythm, to decay among brackish waters circling Ely Cathedral, pus in the dragon's eye. Slade under the hoop of low clouds, hunched & melancholy. His morbid doubts, diet of cheap fats. A dim sun fear balances the throbbing hard red pulse of his meat. 'It stands up like a mast;' his scarlet sex horse. His constant purple-headed lodestone. By the compass of his prick he can walk one direction only, north, to pole star, magnetic, dragged: into maelstrom, into suicide, into convulsive therapy. Mind unoccupied his cock jerks like a dowser's rod, springs upward with such force as to bruise his chest, 'beaten as blue as lead.' And this is his response to landscape, violent: snatching. His pride cements his fear: already they are coming at him, he has made them manifest. The Titanic Mob from Nile Road & the Sabinis from Clerkenwell, the Krays, & the Richardsons from over the water, Jack Comer (aka 'Spot'), Billy Hill, the Tibbs Family & the Nichols, the Upton Park Mob, the Nashes. Voodoo gangs, packs, savage for territory, for land space, skull space, for the sealed

passageways of the labyrinth, for ox heat. They run at each other, wolves without heads, animals rolling towards the fire, claws tearing out flesh, gouging for eye, belly, fur, pelt. Cannibal impulse shifted into dynamite, paint-stripper on white Mercedes, docker's hook & seven-pound hammer. Metal toe-cap flashing sparks in pub yard. Lead-filled hosepipe in the car park. Torso on river mud. Forty-eight numbered segments of the body scattered, forty-eight cuts, a single vitalising sentence. The stars splashed with blood, the stars are swallowed teeth.

They took Slade & broke the bones of his hand. This was on the landing, outside his door. He fixed on the design of the handle: a shell. Steel pins were inserted after they had delivered him to the hospital. His hands are spiders made from the ruin of a black-out umbrella. No word: the direction of his compass unbent. They slid a sawn-off shotgun into his trouser leg, half-comic like a ferret joke, & blew away the flesh of his calf, the muscle, missing the target, shooting blind. A scatter of pellets he still carries, affecting his personal magnetism.

The scryer falters, ad libs, goes onto automatic pilot, repeating the familar heroic elaborations of his tale. He is hooded, in pursuit, of the Hare of the East, of Slade: gauss-pulse racing, sick in belly – in pursuit of language. Counter needle hits red. Pursuit of moon's curve, finely smoothed orbit, inconsistent wobble. Running out, of air. Cold hands. As if held in invisible water trays. Staggering blind between narrowing ditches. The wriggled & excavated snake path. But the track is cold. Slade's power is his lack of passion. Primed, but dead. He is sad, but he is not angry. The pursuit is despair. Do not call it suicide. It is the mere act of following a track, an odour. He sniffs the ground, pokes among dry dog turds for evidence of the great beast's journey, for some bright fur patch, an illumined stool metamorphosed into rock totem or mile-stone. Disease halts the will so that time flashes. These are his insights. Look down.

Between two river tongues Slade is walking; his curve flatters the clock. The sky lengthens, a yawn. Ribs of cloud

support this cage over Hackney Marshes. Slade. Whose pride is a silent thing, whose will pushes him into the cone of chance. He is as stupid as a tragic hero, though not as tall; he recognises no aspect of himself that he can alter. Believes in predestination & the Police Force. His foot has been set on the long bridge to suicide headlines in the *East London Advertiser*. A weapon is purchased, & carried hard, but it will not serve. This is what is meant by stupidity. He did not recognise the futility of duplicating his personal totem. Nobody carries a metaphor who is one already. Erect & standing. One letter from the protein alphabet. A key of brass. This is too facile & is opposed by his blood system as it flows in the reversed direction. Impotence. World picture fragmented. Slade tosses the obstruction into the dark water. Dozmary Pool by Enfield Lock. An hermaphrodite arm rises to catch the polythene-wrapped bundle. Woman's hair like sea weed, slime-covered shoulders. Slade feels his shaft dig. He stands in the expanded calm of false spring morning. The light rolls in from the east, tree-bruised. Wind with bitter channel taste of sea. Invader breath. Compass blade stabs his liver. Slade reclining on Harold's tomb, waiting. Circles of excited magnetism run through the ground, trap him.

Thermal headaches, the mouse frozen in his skull. Cargo is self-delivered for judgement. Slade waits on his fate, an extra. His will cannot run, his spine stiffens as the damp rises.

The grail wash of Tennyson's beard surrounds him on all sides, the lapsing inert glide of solar winds; dust decay of Rosicrucian ideal forms a ghostly aura, or ectoplasmic bowl, around his head. Hoops of candle-light limp out from Slade to the water & the forest, to be received at Borley Rectory.

Steiner approves. Overhead is the well-documented UFO track, SW/NE, frantic as the Heath Row pentagram: the operation of sound, air released to the frequency of 'M-E-R-S-E-A;' which Slade reads, accurately, as 'Mercy,' the Whitechapel word – final mystery & attainment of Sir William Gull's room.

So the sitings fade beyond Thorpe-le-Soken & sink into tidal mud at Mersea Island, flickering lights along deserted

roads. Whirring spiral gyres above the recumbent victim. Myrrh Sea, initiatory Magi gift, resin. Merde Sea, waste sludge of salt dyke, haunt of coypu. Mixing. Inland gulls hover for industrial scraps: but the celestial wound passage is opened & Slade reads the history of his own death.

The Tyrannicides arrive.

Inside the enclosed tropic car heat, fans blowing out essence of jackal, chicken feathers, red mud, Olduvai bone fragment, is the oracular head of Alfredo Garcia: a whisper in fly swarm, in Muscat sand, in the swift tongues of decomposition. Excess of wisdom has made them mad; has dyed the skin, tanned them the colour of saddle leather. Dead meat is changed into sound, dense insect squabble, speaking in tongues. Their blood is malarial fast, Livingstone palor, shivering, brandy & salt tablets: Hand & Hyle, brass-knuckled Tyrannicides.

The head is also the enclosed nuclear box, chest of desert secrets uncovered by Ralph Meeker at the end of *Kiss Me Deadly*, when the last, what remains of, the grail impulse in its most corrupted form, greed, triumph, curiosity, springs the lid, releases the power; the voice cone inverts, mushroom suck of indrawn breath over poison ocean, howl of torture camp roars into metaphor, lion beast heat, flame mane, Babylon; the siren speaks all destruction, all the images of sudden death, violent knowledge. This white truth is strapped with leather thongs, with sturdy clasps of brass, into Reich's accumulator. It rides like the scrolls of the prophets, like an ark hidden by migrant tribes. Or is it simply a sack of muslin through which Garcia's profile prints like an identikit relic, like the Templar Christ, like penal colony maps? An L. Ron Hubbard pyramid disaster key of earthquake & plague that will destroy the Universe by introducing a new concept of time? Is it the final tongue of brass torn from the Serpent?

It rests on Hyle's lap. It speaks the whole *Cantos* of Ezra Pound, including the false starts, & the Roman broadcasts, Martian Hymns, the Cabbala, Gregorian chants, death songs of defeated Plains Indians, stock exchange quotations, Presley's first cut for Sun Records, Northumbrian Pipes –

everything reduced, squeezed, synthesised to one finite buzz. And then it is locked, sealed, clamped: this is the power beneath Hand. This is why the earth scorches AHEAD of the limousine, the skid-path advances, runs out like a water spray in front of the cross-ply radials & is obliterated, dissolves, as the car passes: invisibility.

The door swings open like a safe, out step the Owners in masks of scalped pig, blood-crowned Hand & Hyle; in their own hot wind, the sting of Africa. Rhino horn attached to forehead. Fly whisk. They are enclosed in personal sand-storms, furious vortex: questions, accusations are latent, unspoken.

The tragedy cannot get into gear. The Miracle Play remains a potential, without text. The craftsmen are absent. The audience is distanced, complacent; egoic attention, half-hearing, repulsed by syntactic crudities. It does not touch them.

But the speed: from car to Slade is frenzy, garbled rush of Orphic Mysteries, messenger who cannot get the speech performed in the allowed interval. Kings do not speak or move. Hand & Hyle float on wooden platforms. Peachey is the voice of Hyle. The act of Hand is Hutton. An axe rests on his slanting shoulder.

The summoned acknowledged gods are hidden in septic cloud. Crocodile bear & tiger float through the storm. 'Mercy.' A carpet spread on the church roof for the Judges. A pit appearing in the ground, maw of Hell, for the Devils. Hand & Hyle drifting in dim skies are mistaken for Mersea UFOs. Policemen fall from their bicycles.

The wash of this unachieved event stains Essex. Sawdust tableaux infinitely repeating: the pest hand rises from murky waters to receive the arc of the abandoned revolver, the oiled metal, the caves of incubation that revolve, bullet projectiles sleeping. The focus of Slade's genital pride freezes action. Nothing happens, but Essex is cancelled. Slade's murderous double sets foot for Braintree.

HUTTON: MISSING, PRESUMED DEAD

Text: Hutton, mad samurai, a prisoner on the Moor, is allowed a measure of freedom; runs down the stone avenues, folds into the culture of barrow & cairn, an immediate, unsuspected, sympathy. Is taken away, released by 'friends,' by Hand & Hyle, as token of their power. Kept in a room at the margin of the City. Driven to the riverside, killed.

Counter-Text (Daily Telegraph): 'The grisly discovery of 15 dead ponies at a remote Dartmoor beauty spot is baffling animal experts & has even led to theories that beings from outer space are responsible.

Mr Alan Hicks, an animal lover & pet-shop owner, who stumbled across the decomposing bodies, said yesterday: "It was like finding an elephants' graveyard."

Members of the Devon Unidentified Flying Objects Centre have been on the moor with geiger counters & metal detectors in their own bid to solve the riddle.

Their leader, Mr John Wyse, said: "We know lots of strange objects fly over Dartmoor. It seems to us that something frightened these animals & perhaps even killed them . . . Horses & cattle have been found with bones smashed & bodies drained of blood."

Mrs Joanna Vinson said she had spent hours dissecting the putrefying carcasses, but could not offer any explanation.'

On the Moor, Emblems of Death

emblems, bones of death
the muddy
flesh, knotted hair;
the god of the place crawls busily
in & out
of the socket of the black eye
that isn't there
(the Raven's Fee)

Hutton running,
bruised feet on the flint track;
these tipped circles

the crow hovers
wired to the beat of
his gun
(the vein in the victim's neck)

ah, the whole moor
is heart

pumps, streams, scours

the weed

Hutton climbs; a wrecked car
the twist,
horns of death,
sharp teeth grin from the earth
meaning death, Hutton runs

hail beats on his back

Hutton is hollow, he has no weight
it is transferred to the wheeling sky

big lung clouds

breathing ribs, Hutton runs
beside the forest
his hairs cut

bone scalp
itches for the earth-worm,
blessings of the dead

climbs, stone avenue
names of dead places,
source land, the rivers rise
mauve banks,
the grey
fly is god, dying
to live,
his motion visible, jerks,
the reverse illusion, anti-cinema,
apparently seamless,
the static frames
splashed with ghost life

here the spasms are awkward,
mechanical, seen as
'the hidden mystery'
invisible essence,
strategy of the immortals
who fed here
two thousand years ago
on this same dead cow

the insect drinks from rainwater
in a buried horn,
feeds on plant & meat

Hutton's dim lamp
spins against the clock

returns,
some loose notion of companionship

Goemagot driven out,
the alien
hill forms,
to the uplands from Totnes, in path of Invader

(the first bloody contracts)

fly leeches his wrist
a dripping clock of blood,
Hutton returns

beyond him the bee
hops hedges,
the farmer has his tangle of beans,
red flower badges

the warm places, the clay pits

the glittering grasp,
the welcome
of the sea
is a distance he does not sight,
outrun by tides
he hardens through

through the gates, shadow clock falls
over his stiff shoulders
the blue of bad lungs,
varicose glow,
pitman bruises, translucent,
lips drawn tight
(death photographs this colour)
lens fault, this inky tank

circles, resonances, sympathies:
cobalt
blue as the whisper of a fly

seeing death is to die, carries it
the flies that fed upon dead meat

marry him, infect his blood
as he passes the unseen
carcass in fern, in peat ring
the scattered ribs,
flies suck his back

he looks on,
dead eye,
the virus of the dead word
is in his clothes
he traces the brickwork

with white finger,
the deadman's eye
winks in the cell door
sugar dissolved in water cocoa,
last year's *Playboy*,
('Oh, my grief, I've lost him surely')
gourmet wine list, body list, cocktail jazz
smell of glossy pages stuck with soap

the track of the moor is the time switch
older is bigger,
spurts light into scabby wool,
the dead sheep lies across his shaven chest plain
he does not hear,
the sea reminds him
rivers couple,
his death watches him from the bowl
of night long electricity,
his switch
where moth papers beat & roll

the full moon is a torch upon the maggot's head
too bright, he cannot see
eats through the pores of the stone
the rigidly clamped lips

is an acid-etched
print
of what is missing, a bone of instruction

moon is a word
he has never, will never
speak

Pard to the Giants

Sheepstor:
the death of death,
the migration of the giants
Totnes
across the moor, wading up rivulets
wrapt in wool,
sheep carcass
against hail, mist on the heights
here they fell, here they remain

rock outcrops, Tor fears
necks
scatters of boulder

old hard stone,
knuckle
rib, knee, wrist, shoulder
fall
blood darkens the earth
peat blood drains into swamp

rain on rain,
wade the Severn gash
into Gower the Welsh Uplands,
the procession

Hutton ran in brotherhood
bleak fellowship
that did not satisfy
but fed his sleep

teeth, the last to rot down
coated against soil acid,
bitter rain,
useless to hawk & wolf
adorned the cultivators
as treasure
as value, teeth on the stone
fish in the stone

outcrops on the Moor
where the old ones
fell
and the soft ground was washed away

Hutton gathers these ivory coins
strings them, polishes them
a recognition,
this life
false
to Hutton, infirm
will becomes armoured in enamel
of future need

Hutton is a molar
in the side of
what is to be

'But the Moon struggled in vain to free herself, & at length she fell forward, spent with the struggle, & the black hood fell over her head again, & she had no strength to push it off. Then all the evil things came creeping back, & they laughed to think they had their enemy the Moon in their power at last. The Dead Folk held her, while the Bogles fetched a great stone to put over her, & when the day came

the Moon was buried deep, until someone should find her,
& who knew where to look?'

beware, as Hutton, beware
of the sunset moment
when disk slides under
the moment
when world is at risk
as who should blink & open lid again
upon a whole new place

(the word 'new' is fear)

Hutton had no aesthetic
would not pause upon a rock
to watch sun drop

he ran, back within walls
in the low house of his brothers

impregnated with deaths
he had run past
till his own
ending became tangible

and the guard dogs prickle
lift ear, growl, show teeth

on Hutton, wolf of the Dew Ponds;

skull under cairn
shivers

Princetown inmates huddle against the last hour
they are satisfied by the routines of children's television
the strangling hands knot together
the varnish is picked from chair-arm
the grey foam-rubber is exposed in the cushions

Hutton cannot *see* these images
they stick as bands of sick light
cage his glare
he looks out through them

to the working heart of the machine
& is not soothed, as others are

American voices issuing from
crude animal drawings
are the Deities of Death

screech of manic Woodpecker, or
Top Cat is a figure from the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*,
Deputy Dog is Hierophant

Hutton bows to the imperious tone,
humbled by the gathered speak of mummified lights

he shuts his eyes on the wall
& it continues
the brick line extends to the horizon
the darkness is light in his sleep
his throat contracts on earth
that tastes of toadstools

beware, beware again
of the total embrace of water

as Hutton turns, the mist thickens
Plough & Serpent stars
connect with coded stones
the loose cairns are subterfuge
Hutton's geology
is the dream of Moorland,
the division of waters

brackish lure, sleep trap

Hutton penetrates the Royal Hill,
fills the Childe's Tomb with his rushes,
is received at Lud Gate,
through the Nine Stones into
Belstone Cleave

the wolves are solitary,
the crows
hold to acknowledged boundaries

city news dies in the wire

New Moon Retrospect

closed around them in darkness,
('& then the dark came on')
with him, hardened
clay waistcoat, a pebble his half-hunter
everywhere, with him
between him & the illumination of objects, grasses

Hutton banded since birth with this
so that he rolls out
the dew of unease, cause not remembered
not forgotten,
'M-O-T-H-E-R'
was a stain in the skin of his forearm;
bruise blue
ink of King's Cross
curtained tattoo parlour
'M-O-T-H-E-R': he stroked unconscious

the moors released him, maimed ellipse,
sways to the most neutral
outflow,
that was the trigger pressure
the black tie, needing to be cut away

dark of cell sets about him
he is the spine in a frozen block of sugared water

head hollow & heavy,
elephant boned,

rubs against the walls

suckled by the moisture of his own armpit

the whole throat of comfort, the low buildings
morning anchorite
jogs out

what he does not have is breech
in the fix of his vertical condition:
the head did not tilt, topple over,
engage,
safely,
in the pelvic helmet
that dream blood could flow
with light with precious
reflecting stones, wines & rubies

smeared then
against a wall of restraints
feel, barely,
a saline thread of necessity
earth gruel continuing all the way

stories of giants (himself);
blanched at the horror of treachery
low human deceit, 'good management',
Jack the Assassin & his
mealy-mouthed, grasping mother
nothing but gold,
blanched at the executions of Saturn,
Satan, Serpentarius
the old
the old ones, the old order of the planets

horror, unspeakable child horror
at cruelties worked on solitary witches,
the routines of mammoth domesticity in cloud castles

not think of it, not recall
now, new moon, the red going
the bluey comforts, processional

the cloud is a jockey mounted
on a rabbit, is a rat pursuing,
stretches, & is not devoured
by Hutton's moderate consciousness
he does not fully claim what he sees
not *realise* not own
is without possession of himself
and thus of all others

toothmug, slop bowl, soap cake
are free in his presence;
not the greed of the author eye

is 'there' as the stones are

wants neither more nor less

only the spoke-holes of loving betray him
the first words of kindness
are sugared rats of destruction

what gave him warmth would burn him
till the brains boiled in his cup
till his finger nails were gnawed
till the maggots fattened in his cheek
and the crow took his tongue
till he was totally gone
into the condition of legend
flat, ironed out
no more than words on a page

no triumph; the arrogance of the satiated fly

HUTTON:
THE DEATH

'A poet is a time mechanic not an embalmer'
Jack Spicer

'streaming'; 'flowing boundary'
weak pulse
of beating light in the van roof
our time mechanic is present, bears witness,
water perspiration down the side of the metal trunk
boxed in
windows misted over; smoke

last meat devoured, takeaway curry
with thick jaundice skin & rubbery knuckles
chewed up, activates the clutch of belly

'struggled to tie his speech to words'
knew he was in the inevitability of that rush
(moon plumage)
seems to be headlong, the plunge
tho' windowless

is calm, no corners
'strain was so great that he shat
into the plastic bag they'd wrapped him in'
(as with the midnight purple force of birth)
the force from inside so great it shook them
the hole that opened in his neck
they disappeared into the chasm the van
sucked in, the earth kiss

like Janet Leigh's corpse car in *Psycho*, down
off-set;
the corrugated corner of dockland is sliding
helplessly into the wound
waters burst, plug's gone
'a brown colour', 'no odour'

nails filling with curls of plasticised paint
(intimacy of tortured for torturer) fall down
wound is wider than Thames
swallows the mess
the butchered hesitations, the inhibited fantasies

Hutton gone, 'streaming'
a column of industrial rains over Wanstead

CHORUS FOR THE SHAPE OF HIS DEATH

'stiffs',
the horizontal ones
looking into the perished star heart
the stiffened dead
erect beyond exhaustions, passionless
beyond arousal;
the belly finger points up
into the moon, soured on the death essence
of slaughtered assassins
they have nowhere else to go
the full moon magnetic
sucks death out of the ghetto
the closed chamber
(of the heart, revolver)
odourless, transmits

Hutton transmits, 'streams'
his death shout unuttered
cancels the cul-de-sac, plants marram grass
into the paving stone,
activates the wave of surrender
is again, unborn, a clay
ball of tongues
a venomous, expelled
gob of words
unachieved, unwelcome

Hutton the stiff one
revolves through cement mixer
        conglomerate
with flint & gravel, with sand-dredged aggregates
        tipped,
                born into the East Way Flyover
vertical above Lea Water, shoulder to Stratford
        face to the Marshes
a literal & continuing part of the City

we commute between the vast spread of his thighs

VICTIMS:
AN APPENDIX

DIVERSION; INTERLUDE; PERFORMANCE. CONCERT IN THE PARK, mistakenly called *Free*; attended by its own rumours. Every breath has been sold & resold. The sky is predicted, divided into squares & the squares numbered. Check the chart, check your investment: media concessions, hamburgers, heroin, 'exclusives.'

They have not allotted space to the squatting ghosts of the ground, the crusty mould on the Suicide Tree:

'It is a large sinister-looking Plane tree, covered with ugly growths on its truck, & has a strange hole in its side about 12 feet from the ground. Beneath it runs the old Tyburn river. Its reputation dates from the early 18th century when many fatal duels were held beneath its wide-spreading branches. During the 19th century it became known for suicides, usually committed by hanging from the lowest branch.'
Michael Chambers

Hand Hyle & Kotope are present: vampire, vulture & vamp to that maudlin vertigo, the spin, of artificial ecstasy powder that is very slowly, before their own eyes, turning into 'the real thing.' They are cased-up in 200 guinea armour-plated mohair, wired for shock on contact.

Kotope has gathered a party around him, Inn on the Park, safely behind double-glazing, afternoon candles, high above the heads of the people. He has dressed up some shop-assistants, a rhabdomancer, a retired trade journalist, an art

student, & a girl who hopes to revive Noël Coward. Champagne is handed around in disposable beakers. Kotope does not drink.

Hand & Hyle are in the Pyramid Room, perched above the erected ears of the giant Rabbit, the secret summit of the Playboy Club. From outside this apartment does not even exist: it is a miracle of linear juggling, a spatial distortion borrowed from Dr Caligari. The greedy eye comes to accept its own presumptions.

This room is reserved for the Owners, & the owners of the Owners: 'Mafia' will not go near to naming these powers, or the masks, the ridges of dead rubber, that they wear. The names move around the planes of the wall, unguided stars, a planetarium light show eaten into the cornice with volatile acids ... WARNER BROTHERS ... CIA ... WATERGATE ... ONASSIS ... KREMLIN ... SINATRA ... CAESAR ... CAPONE ... AKBAR ... MOSES ... AMENOPHIS ... QUETZALCOATL ... CTHULHU ... CROWLEY. Mortuary tableaux: Louis B. Mayer in rut with the crushed skull of the decapitated Jayne Mansfield, Hand dipping his gloved paw into the wounds of James Dean. Whispers, scandals, conspiracies. The rumour of Howard Hughes in surgical cocoon, awaiting a fresh incarnation on the ninth floor, is the barrage-balloon that supports the ceiling. The secret is in the shape. Energies are perpetually renewed: as the edge of the razor is preserved by crystalline equations. Pleasure is repeated into mania. The past is an expectation. Light is the future.

They are vacant with spurious excitement disguised as boredom, disguised as convulsion, disguised as savagery, disguised as 'an indifferent social manner.' Hand looks down with interest on the stage. The figures are his mandrake roots, he makes of them what he will, he wills them to his pattern. They answer to his genetic imperatives. He knows that it will soon be necessary to arrange another stepped sequence of shock horror drug revelations: to set the front pages in black ink screams of hysteria, to put media prurience, moral indignation & uncut jealousy, to work. The name of the star & the name of the drug are locked into

the adhesive embrace of headline. There is no route to one without the other. The numbed animal mass brain jelly sniffs up his implication. His street traders enlarge their lists. Newspapers are willing servants of the Poppy. Wealth flows; treated nature. The currency itself is the tube; white dust crystal to the nostril through the lightly rolled banknote.

Hyle focuses his heat through a telescope. It lingers over some of the more obvious contours. He relishes the ankle of a certain lady who is versatile enough to be accompanying Slade, arms intertwined, tongues wrestling like lizards, while remaining the wife of a close relative of Hyle's, at present 'out in Africa in a bit of trouble.'

Slade's card is marked. Hand's 9mm Mauser raps against the glass. His mouth makes the noise. He simulates: just this side of ecstasy.

The crowd is a tongue curled around itself. The punters are cattled: manipulated by 'nowness,' the tyranny of date fixation; if the event is 'missed' the citizen is reduced. Everybody wants a piece of the imaginary action. There is a direct route opening to the Goat. So many demons have been summoned they are queuing up to get into the Aether Band. Cloud banks are purple, Serpentine ruffled. The media fix freezes the event into a time vault. All hearts miss one beat. Fingers of Eternity warm the already boiling cauldron. Hell's Angels (Walthamstow Chapter) stomp back the advancing hordes, tidy the line. A girl who has been paid to do so, spontaneously, bares her breasts.

At this point the Performer falls onto the stage; in muslin, in bracelets, begins.

Bad Magic, Bad Noise

inflames;
ignited on the octane
of his spear-like ego
(Wagner extra)
belemnitic cone, rises as a sheath of hard

wraps of open silking, gold rings
Tangier mountain music
straw caves
dust-haunched squatters
in turban, rags & old jackets

he cuts his sac,
across
the blood rubies dot the tight flares
stitched over the crotch
fake genital muscle
gets inside
the need, so loosely defined
wilds them, wastes their awe
sucks at bone
till they skate
a brittle, stamping mob

he is false shaman, mushroom page
with white powder in a silver lock
to matt his face
his spleening song, labial rage
unsexed to flare & float

they drown, he quotes Shelley
Adonais,
opens himself
to a fierce possession, is possessed
'Jumping Jack Flash' is on his back, dry mate
matelot anguish; attracts Hand

who couches him towards the part
they will play gangsters
Performance is not relished
by Mafia bosses in a heavier serge
'unreal & mucky'
even dirty money must come clean
the generation misled
street fighting man's boutique
Hand's puppet
& sore friend
savage pre-Raphaelite, puny boy
mixed with hatchet man
parties

the shaman arouses, but does not
satisfy, can't get
the great lift,
emasculated by horse

a three minute aura
broken from Byzantine ikon shed

the pyre is staffed by
shit-stained Angels
& they stomp

Kotope cuts the cake, to sell

the burnt park grass enters him
the crystal-tip stick
blazing
spirit of Shelley
water weed, choke
fills his throat

he shimmers

spangles, grasping divisions of light
flashing beady stones

as the crowds throng
the raised snake of this hanging field
the dome reflection
the lifted City in the vapour
the raised City
the celestial
at that one moment
above the lake
the possessed figure
the tube
of what Shelley was

here, he lifts & is pinned
spasmic mongol, dumb rattle
the highest articulation
SCREAM
bubbling in pink, oxygenated blood

he is hung out across the trees
Tyburn also, the female figure
the hanged man's marionette dance
dancing in air, drinking salt
he spurts, he refuses
the crowd gasps him
death is aphrodisiac, flirt
plant to wear, convolvulic sway
female, has made himself

has cut
give give give

for the snake the grass
pull
pull back into the dog mask,
the screen
disintegrates held consciousness
into a speeding catastrophe of cloud

Hyle on the balcony
tossing
his jism into the eager face of the crowd
black, black inside
black

'the deep truth is imageless'

fatalistic green, water serpent
Serpentine
whispers an invitation
Harriet, the jagged sound edge
ruffles the surface

'in breaking traditional ties one sets free in man
unknown forces, the consequences of which
one cannot foresee' –
river, communicant

water connects to water
he does not float or swim

water bursts in upon water
the bag floods, excess

the unborn child is
crushed in excess of one element

& this is why he lifts

this is why he kicks, raises himself
into the air
to ignite the vapour packet
to tear the clouds

Hyle sniffs the weakness in his underpants

Hyle is knowing tho' illiterate

rain

THE HORSE. THE MAN. THE TALKING HEAD.
(a note on Howard Hughes)

'Post mortem effects, presumably'
D. H. Lawrence

HOWARD HUGHES WAS of course finished when he became a character in Edward Dorn's *Gunslinger*: an inscrutable. He bleeds here into the ventriloquised (the haunted) horse, his guilt & mouthpiece, the glib Aaron to his dumb powerful Moses basalt presence: snake conjuror, wandsman. The horse is the city, is perhaps Jewish. The man is a hayseed. Tied to the apparently rigid continental centrefold. They need each other to put a good act together. If they are to go on the road they have to be able to break monologue into conflict, conflict into wisecrack.

So the action cranes through horse skull into McCarthy Land, a flat-lit studio stable, with Francis the Talking Mule & other Presidential candidates mouthing, just out-of-synch, esoterically coded word chants they are learning with difficulty. The desperate strain shows through the carefully ironed faces. The counter chorus is provided by the androgynous anthropomorphic unpunished berserker hero assassins of the cartoon newsreels of mid-afternoon television.

Hughes had to live with this. No heroes in America, only 'heros.' The land will not allow it. From the beginning it inflates to destroy. The bigger the man the faster the maggots gather. The will is towards suicide.

'IXTAB was the goddess of suicide. On the Dresden Codex, she is represented hanging from the sky by a rope wound round her neck. The Maya had the idea that suicides went directly to heaven.'

Hate then. 'A hate quest.' Hughes was sharp enough to understand the nature of the beast. You cannot be anonymous either: 'a worker.' Unless on TV; where the act of stardom is to make the anonymous glitter. To spray anonymity in gold light, to gutter out the individual spark, the unique, the inviolate, the flaw; which is the true drive, life.

Hughes was bright enough to try to force the star-cope down, to obscure the face, the source. He wanted to reverse into the invisible. He knew enough to be crazy, crazy like a fox. He was the intelligence of America. Letting the body decay, definitively. Into the destruction karma. Which is the nature of those states. He became one with the states, destruction.

His glove puppet, Nixon, failed by the small measure that 'R. M. Nixon' is not quite an anagram of 'Rex Mundi.' He fell behind on his payments & was fractured. The Devil was bored with him (as he was with Somerset Maugham who, it seems, made the deal via Aleister Crowley). The Devil foreclosed. And Hughes was his operative. Hughes was the Devil. In America. Glamour. Fur mouth. A force. An energy.

Hughes took the virus, communism, into his body. As pure threat. Made the metaphor real. Was invaded, by conspiracy, unto death. Was the White Messiah, Buddha, incarnation of White Man America, longhaired guru saint, tended by Mormons laced with chastity corsets into their own essence, that no seminal drop spill where it could fertilise the desert ground. Hughes gave off light like a mushroom.

The confusion between interior & exterior, studio & world, skull & plain, is absolute. Realities oscillate: so that Shirley Temple can be leased from her studio to the Republican Party, or Ronald Reagan can graduate from

playing epileptic juveniles for Don Siegel to the heavy in *The Killers* to chewing the rug in the Governor's Palace.

All the old cowboy extras want to be Time Lords, want to be on that deflected curve when it starts to go backwards, to zero, when the horse becomes the passenger, drawn along by the force of the question in their thighs, when the horizon keys open & the diamond word does seem to be held in the teeth of the questing beast. After horse wisdom there is no way back to that territory, the previous: no entry in red eye, in tarot poker, in massage, frottage, dope, in love's claw. So they imitate the horse's tone but have lost the coin of his meaning.

Hughes arrived early with his eye unhooded. Religion was in the mouths of his frontmen like an asthmatic whistle. He was quick to put himself behind Mormon muscle. ('It is possible that Mormons are the forerunners of the coming real America.' Lawrence again.)

This was the colour of his horse, plucked from the sentiment of the high plains landscape, opening shot silhouette figure, with credit titles over, entering from the left: death. The horse is the ghost of conscience thrust forward on the prow of Corporate Optimism that made America grow, that expanded the continent until the Atlantic was the size of the Fleet Ditch.

Back further: through horse mediumship, horse host, to the Mari Lwyd, the white skull that translates the buried acts of the dead from ice ground to the house & hearth, the fire, the bolted door; an annual contract, to put remorse & birth-guilt into a formal rhyme scheme. Made whore. Ribbon-hung face with painted scarlet lips. Back into Asian shamanism, the beast slung from the beams, the conical hut. Dried steppe bacon against transcontinental winds.

Hughes again, his silver monoplane, making a round-the-world flight in snowstorm & sneakers, harnessing the power of 1,100 horses. The meat gets higher with message. Rosy word dawn. Cornflakes at Moscow Airport. Back, finally, to the dragon buried beneath the chalk.

And if you could hit a photo image of this creature (infra-red; X-ray; planet ray; energy forced out of destroyed matter

to steal a ghost print) then you would come close to the newspaper radio dots that form 'an artist's impression' of the dead Hughes on his stretcher, Mandarin nailed, bearded martyr face. Which is the face of a man kept alive by time-surgery since at least the early 19th century, before the American Civil War, deep frozen, to emerge on the foaming crest of the industrial war boom, to make bombers, poisons, anti-personnel devices, gigantic unusable flying-boats, to put the word 'genius' back into newspulp currency, to own newsprint forests, hot lead, to own the sound waves, to own image factories. It is the shell of something, wound out of his own spine. It is what is annihilated so that energy can step free.

To be possessed by that wind, to speak with no voice, voice of buffalo tribe medicine, sacrificial stone mouth, sun swallower, to be invisible, to be snatched up by an intelligence as fast as Dorn's, after the event, is why the event was allowed to occur. The whole Hughes myth was perpetrated so that Dorn could embroider a few pages of absolute text, beat the time rap. With Hughes the fake biography is probably so much more reliable & accurate, an act of occult mediumship & greed, than any printout from officially approved sources. 'Brilliance', 'inspiration', 'hunch', 'omen', 'front', 'con': that was where he operated. Without these pins he had no existence. He was the mark on the transparent medium through which his heat had passed. He was the scar, the shadow, on locked glass office towers.

When the entropic green clock faltered, heart murmur, Hughes hid inside the letters of his own name, headlines in alabaster & plywood, to convince the machines of his reality, to seduce them: like the giant letters H-O-L-L-Y-W-O-O-D on the scrub hill, slide area, outside that geriatric suburb, zero density, no go, terminal zone.

He scrambled together, directing the technicians by long-distance telephone calls, early shed Westerns, made from Dwight D. Eisenhower's wet dreams: & helmeted flying dramas. Saw the heat of the hybridisation, ritual courtship, between black instruments of war & Jean Harlow. Her

suicide forcing her to copulate with the spectres of First World War battle fantasy mud.

Hughes tried to steal some of the technical facility of Howard Hawks by transference of 'H' confusion: to pirate his aura, his skin energy. If the names were close enough to breed into each other, the talents might also be borrowed & mix in the eye of the unconscious observer, whose diet is fed on misprint & lies & the space-time curvature of message slipping through the cracks of solid air.

'EMINENT AUTHORS, INC' paint the sky with
high grade acrylic sprays
drill with
TOOLCO bits the impermeable rock stairs
the clots of dead consciousness, numb ganglia
roots of pulled teeth

shape the new
out of midwest prairies of rabbit ghosts &
sky cactus
sup the tap-root milks
& polish the enamel with sand

rabies quickens brain time
'out there'
daisies rush up between
Dow Jones aeon canyons
like chalk dust

the conscious flattens sight into a
saucer, dead presidents yammer in flight
torn from the moon's bad profile

the great men sell their names
before birth
tie up their energies in interlocked
Monopoly Trust contracts
slip through the small print
water to smooth the cutting edge

'pressure'

Hughes buys into Mormons. He is the tramp hanging about in battered Dodge on street corner junctions where desert sand blows into the flat & unprotected suburb: is the wino in torn tennis-shoes* negotiating the sale of RKO Studios (aka Keith Albee Orpheum Corporation), controlling interest acquired by Joseph P. Kennedy, 1927, to further his body possibilities, to enlarge the brothel options in his unpublic life, to literally extend the reach of his horn into the darkest speakeasy shadows in the land. Though there was for Kennedy, as for Hughes, as for Getty, a time-price to pay. We have Benjamin Bradlee's description of Jackie Kennedy taking old Joe in to dinner:

'She has to stand slightly behind him so that she can kick his right leg forward between steps. He can't do it himself. When he eats he drools out of the right side of his mouth, but Jackie was wiping it off quickly, & by the middle of dinner there is no real embarrassment left.'

Sex greed disguised remains a constant secret motor in high business art: the massive seizure & colonisation of popular collective fantasy for private control purposes. See it as J. F. Kennedy cornered the Presidency to lance his own heats & push his pricked fear & spine-pain deeper into the fat lands of milk & beef & bible-belt mammal America; to double, to ghost, in gangster pulp porno scripts written for chamber performance by Norman Mailer

('I met Jack Kennedy in November, 1946. We were both war heroes, & both of us had just been elected to Congress. We

* NOTE: Hughes invariably favoured unlaced rubber & canvas footwear to make it easy on his cloven-hoofs. The resultant goatskin soup sweat is better left unimagined: tho' the generous influx of foot-fetishists doubled the takings at Donald O'Connor's Las Vegas comeback.

went out one night on a double date . . . I seduced a girl who would have been bored by a diamond as big as the Ritz')

to borrow desert Real Estate from Frank Sinatra for adulterate seclusion; to open the malarial lid on Mafia/Cinema/Teamster Union operations with one hand, while making the pay-off in Invisible Numbered Funds with the other – to secure the flame of assassination, Cuban Pig Invasion gunlaw armament expertise & wiped-tape silence. See it as Robert Kennedy in Irish martyr purple stain purchased the TV time for his own sacrifice, bought a myth place – in order to fuck the suicide ghost essence of Marilyn Monroe, barbiturate telephone motel, copulation beyond limits, in mortuary corridors of death of fear: after-hour closed sessions at the Studios, when all the great dead stars perform in cold-storage skin flicks, in blue air, for the faceless executives in cowhide chairs. See it as Teddy Kennedy plunged car & neck-brace in cold-creek negatives to pull attention back from the Moon Shot masterminded by the White House as a tribute to its rescued Nazi scientist geniuses. Dr Strangelove really does want to know if *hitting* that pallid rock will confirm a magnetic potency on the mind, the planner, of the first push. The game is slipping away down here – but the starry wheels are still up for grabs.

the moon with blood on its cheek

'WANNA LOSE TEN UGLY POUNDS? CUT OFF YOUR HEAD'
Lenny Bruce, quoted, *Rolling Stone*

dead man, stuck on old country rails
where the same pattern of smoked laughter
has to run him, over & on

that ½ rock to the sw last night, soon lost
the thickening cortisone face
President Kennedy

where the impact channels cleaned out his corruptions
necrophilia of mormon barracks
mating of dead archetypes called, falsely, 'STARS'

so the moon is a mausoleum
where the dead fuck
is the veteran off-limits brothel ship
catering to the immortalised
quirks & bends of the spirit

& we are battened down under its waste trench;
the dead cannot come
the suicides condemn themselves
to huge & hungry marble erections

Nero Moon, bandaged Mussolini
cut stalk

the missing eye of Rooster Cogburn
is the cork in the bottle

trashy rock sidetracks the alignment
they don't think clear

'Men are free when they belong to a
living, organic, *believing* community, active
in fulfilling some unfulfilled, perhaps
unrealised purpose. Not when they are escaping
to some wild west. The most unfree souls
go west, & shout of freedom'

And Hughes is the name given to the source of all these manipulations & dares. There are forgotten men in small town temperance hotels & mining shacks, mid-continental inertia, who have literally been waiting in their rooms, sitting by the bed, looking out on meridian main street traffic, bills paid by computer, for over thirty years – for the phone call from Hughes that will activate them: & meanwhile they write, on typewriters, science fictions & horror god inventions, squeeze nature into aborted surgeries, work for *Weird Tales*, John Campell's *Astounding* or Roger Corman; they invent (or are made aware of) impossible

literatures in languages that were never spoken, the Necronomicon, or Ludvig Prinn's *Mysteries of the Worm*. They alone have the emptiness of time to observe, at their own speed, at the speed of the beast itself, the insects in the wall cracks, the scratching behind the skirting-board, the bugs in the mattress, the crumb-fed pests, the skull parasites, the pubic crabs, the moths of light bulbs, the microscopic organisms at their work. They see them & translate them into their fictions – which become undercover reportage, transcripts of reality. The invented horrors are literal. They alone see the shape-shifting of the windows. They alone stare, night after night, at the planets. They become part of the machinery. The flying saucers & Cayce-inspirations spiral from their apparent boredom. They compile fantastic books of newspaper-cuttings & impossible statistics. They 'inspire' the imprisoned Manson with scientology & visions of the Cosmic Hole. They fill the dead hours for Oswald at his window. They are found in the cupboards of rapists & tin van butchers. They wipe the blood & bone from the chainsaw. They become the secret ant army controlled by emptiness, by time-wedges driven into their lifelines: are controlled as Hughes himself is controlled. It is, it has to be, mutual: a genetic, self-satisfying, dictatorship.

And when the phone does finally ring, long after it has been cut off, they are dead – in suicide & red-eye bottle, in blood needle. And then the horror tales themselves take fire & life, bend out, curve into the world, scythe blade, sugar'd nipple, with snake tongue dart to pierce new victims, vampire, in the Odeons of South London, or those frightened of the sleep machine who trudge once again through the distortion of Jacques Tourneur's *Night of the Demon* on midnight television chambers.

Hughes too is sucked into this vortex. Has put so much of himself into bank vaults, numbered accounts, invisible back-dated deals, hidden from his own self's flame, biological theatre transactions, that he can't find his way back into his own body: & at this very point the energy stream of America, the shimmering milk flood, is tapped by Ed Dorn, & at this point the old mummy cracks into sawdust &

stitches, & what never was there is seen to be absent. The recorded voice track coughs & fades. They pull out of Vietnam, the colonial push is over, & the ventriloquist's dummy that Hughes operated in the White House is stranded with nothing but the gangster cassettes from *The Big Heat* & Hawks' *Scarface* & *Point Blank* & the whole edifice comes down like the last days of Sodom.

But then somebody takes an option on this story. The adrenalin hits in cigar conferences. They think they might get Robert Redford. They remake the end of the world with old volcano footage. They hack Moby Dick into pieces of shark, gorilla, King Kong, exorcist bile, Lee Marvin, Clint Eastwood, magnum force, & the decaying head of Alfredo Garcia. The white moon juices of natural power are perverted. A sharp young executive in felt hat, ghost dance trappings, & tennis sneakers, name of Howard, comes up with the idea of using life, TV America, day-to-day reality as a rehearsal for the Movies. They can try some of the more way out & experimental & possibly high expense stuff in the streets; cut the investment to the bone, stop building sets; fix time. The picture men shift into a world of slowed-down action replays. Out there among the citizens it has become a video software universe. The excitement lifts into their dry mouths. The whole thing moves on again.

At the end of an Earls Court reading of the Hughes piece in November '76 I was approached & told about a text, *The Gemstone File*, that had been in recent circulation & that contained further information on the Hughes/Kennedy power nexus; while into my other ear a man in a rally driver's chemically quilted jacket warned me that he did not think my audience could possibly understand the significance of the term 'death posture', & that if I thought I was quoting from Kenneth Grant I was actually quoting from *him*, he was the fountain & source of Grant's African material. So the Hughes shard cut into a jagged & nervous pitch of attention, boiling particle desire for escape; which

was soon accomplished, plunging down stairs, & the experience exorcised by walking back across town to Hackney, cool star evening along the River, up through the calm'd City, coffee stall outside Christ Church, Spitalfields, midnight bells of Truman's Brewery, Brick Lane.

Two months later a pamphlet entitled *A Skeleton Key to The Gemstone File* found its way into my hands. From this I learnt that *The Gemstone File* itself had been 'written in many segiments over a period of years by an American named Bruce Roberts.' Roberts was a student of journalism & physics, that quintessential New World pair-bonding. His 'special interest was crystallography: the creation of synthetic rubies.'

Naturally this was of some moment to Hughes Aircraft: who used his work for laser beam research. And the hanger door swings open for Roberts on Trans Global Paranoia Incorporated. Joining the stable of tame alchemists, dieticians, astrophysicists, steel skin technicians, electronic eavesdroppers, Mormons & psychopaths, he is soon travelling the greasy rails of conspiracy theory. And he stumbles across a world picture whose bleak symmetry is appealing to his split consciousness.

He discovers that in March '57 Hughes was kidnapped by his own Mafia operatives under the direction of Aristotle Onassis: beaten, brain-damaged, shot full of heroin, shunted through a series of identical penthouse hotel suites, locked in a cell on Skorpios, a human vegetable (& why, incidentally, should 'vegetable', even in this context, be a term of abuse?), dying, finally, in April '71.

It's a fine pattern, the shapes fit neatly together: one of many projections floating about just ahead of, or just behind, the event screen. But the Hughes/Dorn thesis is altered not at all by these fresh speculations & end-games. Go back through the text & for the symbol 'H' (Hughes) substitute the symbol 'O' (Onassis): if you want to play by Gemstone Rules. For Mafia read Mormon. For Mormon read Mafia. And when later switches in temperature, in focus & attention, shift the earth's magnetic field taking the

heat away from Greece to, say, Anatolia, Nepal, or Peking – then for 'H' (Hughes) read 'M' (Mao); or whoever.

Either the facts are all, or they are nothing. An impenetrable maze of statistics, lost in space & time; dead ends, fake corridors, pits, traps. All that matters is the energy the structure emits. Can it heat us? Is it active? Or simply a disguise for the lead sheet imprisoning the consciousness of the planet; the gas of oppression, the burnt-out brain cells, milk-centred eyes.

So many versions of the Hughes myth cloud the surface. It is hard to force a sharp image from the emulsion. There are only drawings, the last photographs are hazy sentiments of an earlier era. So many off-cuts. The Nicholas Roeg/David Bowie *Man who Fell to Earth* is only one current example. There are plenty more in denser thickets of Science Fiction. This does not matter, it must be understood as a smoke-screen, a diversionary tactic.

What is crucial is why certain information comes forward at certain times: why Hughes now? He is such a period number, such a date-stamped poison. He is dead. When you work this tank what is feeding you your 'inspiration'? Who are you working for?

And this is only the beginning of the doubts: shortly after the Earls Court reading the flak starts to pour through. First, the pathologist's report on Hughes in *The Times*; then the new easy-to-handle *Express* opens its campaign with the serialisation of James Phelan's *Howard Hughes: The Hidden Years*. Which includes such headlines as A LIVING SKELETON IS SMUGGLED TO PARADISE + ALL OF A SUDDEN THERE WAS THIS SWARM OF MONGOLIAN MONKS FROM MARS INVADING THE CAGES + FAKE THAT LURED THE REAL VOICE BACK TO LIFE. And this is attended, of course, by full media spin-off: TV book programme plugs, radio ads, brain midges & electronic parasites eating through the wall cracks, everywhere.

So what happens, & the fear, is that somehow we move just ahead of the causal tide, but are attached to it: we are pushed forward on the nose of the time-cone. Or else – by

travelling the rim of an area of collapsing density we get ahead of events by one beat, cause the events to follow.

The implication is sticky. The theory forces the fact: so that the written word, or the calculation in mathematical language, if it is pure, if the pattern has charm, will remake the physical world. Which is what Dorn did for Hughes.

Quarry & prey shadow each other. Moving closer, melting, merging, separating. Time edges ahead of itself: we are sucked into the vortex, elongated. Possessed by what we know, which is what we will discover, & in doing the work we decay, are destroyed: the cell collapses. Perfection shifts the stars, on however small a scale: & this, by instant playback, restructures the donor. Which is a whole new sweep of terror.

It is also an absolute challenge to the work undertaken; because if your thesis breaks surface instantly, is made public on media umbrella, as soon as you construct it, then you have to work faster, sharpen your wits, go deeper, find the strata beneath the skin, confront the primary mineral controls.

Or; can you transfer your allegiance, out of the dark, to the pulse rhythms of the natural world? Pull away from the Black Hole & opt for White Nature: the New Age, growth, community, the Light. The price is high here also. The body cost savage. Check any account of those who have made the attempt. The maimed psyches, the ego assassinations of somewhere like Findhorn, rooted in sand on one of the great Scottish power tracks. It is no simple alternative.

Any attempt in this direction is opposed by the whole feed of the Occult, a complex & secretly worked system of parallels, analogues & models: as for example, on a banal level, the correspondence between the Bermuda Triangle & the Golden Triangle of the Opium Trade. The Bermuda Triangle is operated as a blind. That shape takes fringe attention away into petty mystification & paperback frisson; so that the Cambodian operation can proceed uncluttered, undisturbed.

'Heroin from the Golden Triangle was sometimes brought into the US in the bodies of GIs who had died in battle in Vietnam. One body with the guts removed can hold up to 40 pounds of heroin.'

So what substance was stuffing the mummified Hughes? What use could Onassis find for his catatonic shell?

'Lots of heroin gets processed in a Pepsi-Cola factory in Laos.' The metaphor, Pepsi/Heroin, is a simple one: twin forms of genetic colonisation. Giving entry once more to the bitter seductions of Cinema. Joan Crawford was the official front for Pepsi at the same period as she was making her ravaged fat gut horror films: *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*; *Straitjacket*; *I Saw What You Did.* The best of this action supervised by Robert Aldrich, taking the rectal temperature of the times as accurately as he did for Eisenhower America in *Kiss Me Deadly.*

Beyond this point we come up against the Burroughs formulation about 'the paranoid being the person in possession of all the facts.' It is a straight take to Insanity Farms. You are soon genuinely 'out of it.'

As Hughes himself was: when he lay, naked & emaciated, in bed sores, with malfunctioning kidneys, watching those endless loops of film. The man who could buy anything, could run Presidents, chose this: coded narcosis, dim colour sleep.

Where was he? What had he split into by this time? What space was he travelling? Every detail murders a million brain cells.

He had the Great Silence: was possessed of a truth richer than the visions of electro-convulsive therapy, darker than the tone of terminal alcoholics, madder than the gnomic prophecies of derelicts, further than the screamed secrets of raging women on midnight buses.

Hughes was crazy as a tick. He would not cut his hair or his nails. He hoarded the gold of his urine. James Phelan describes it:

'Relieving himself took hours, & he was too weak to sit all

that time in the bathroom. Instead of being emptied the jars had been capped & stacked in a corner of his little bedroom.

The employees had to get rid of a three-year supply of Hughes's urine & then wash & destroy the jars. One aide kept interrupting the job to go off . . . & retch.'

No one must take hold of his power. No one must be allowed to tap into his sources, to analyse & break down his secret. There was to be no final 'Rosebud' whisper.

To carry the unsupportable burden of physicality there was an official double, the appropriately named Wayne Rector, who was killed at the Inn on the Park. His death mingling with the screams & aethers of Free Concert hysteria.

The formation of his disguise was a simple matter. The reason creatures from alien spacecraft, when described in eye-witness newsprint accounts, so closely resemble the imagined versions of science fiction cover illustrators & science fiction movies is not that the film-makers are gifted with preternatural insight, but that the 'creatures' base their material forms on the images of celluloid, just like everybody else. We see what we expect to see, so that the imagination is not unbearably stretched. Hughes based his meat presence on the rumours & myths. We see what we expect to see long after the essence, the essential being, has moved on.

The double is, finally, as real as the man himself, as real as any of them: Hughes, Onassis, Kennedy, Rockefeller, Nixon. They have all long since been cloned from some perjured splinter. Their ghosts haunt the empty corridors of media, the air channels. The action is translated to a new plane of being.

The conspiracy theorists will have to dig deeper into the star-map to find any trace of movement. Their small insights are sparks thrown out as cinders of hell, bright clinker that scalds the closed lids of the dead, that grants, at best, a momentary illumination.

27/9/78: A friend from the book-market, Chris Renwick, rings & mentions that Paige Mitchell, who has been teaching in his summer school, recently fed him an interesting anecdote: she had a temporary job with a lawfirm & thought one of the pinstripes looked familiar but could not instantly recover the right mugshot from her memory bank. Then it came on her that it was me he looked like – the man saw her staring & walked across. 'Hello,' he said, holding out a hand, 'my name's Howard Hughes.'

THE OLDER, HIDDEN POWERS; THE SECRET MINDS

SKOFELD, MAN OF THE EAST

'But the causes of disease you should ask me about privately . . . because they are too arcane to be described before ordinary people'
Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius*

'the compass is absolved'
the man of the east, you may not name

to cut with shears across the living jet;
stormwater from a flooded pool

it is a city of reflected images
(*Don't Look Now*)
dark double-faces staring in
from outside the train window,
the boxed mysteries of local fields
'darkness before, and danger's voice behind'
escarpments, faces under the river
strangled in pondweed

the city should return to the seabed
a labyrinth fish tank
'those long vistas, sacred catacombs,
where mighty minds lie visibly entombed'
narrow street heights offering small protection;
the cold is murderous,
suicide is their companion
its sugars haunt their dreams
sweetness

taken with a scalpel from midnight leaves
siren song of coal gas in the grate

green is parted, the dome folds back
'subtle speculations, toils abstruse'
to discover the mathematical consistencies
of the Heavens, the ironies of God

'let me dare to speak/a higher language'

mind travels out, in blue pulse light

'conscious step of purity & pride'

deserted flesh suffers a self-collapse
decays; untenanted, ignored

we shall not miss him, he is Skofeld

he is the east, sickening

his companion, Private Kox,
seconds him at a distance

'to punish thee in thy members'

'. . . looking forth by light
of moon or favouring stars. I could behold
the antechapel where the statue stood
of Newton with his prism & silent face
the marble index of a mind for ever
voyaging through strange seas of thought, alone'

Cambridge is become the city of death
wear silver, complement the black

Liverpool Street, buy a ticket,
the lines

are open,
old Bethlem Hospital,
GREAT EASTERN optimism is gone;

on the margin of the stew, penetrated
by the shadow of Christ Church, Spitalfields,
burial ground beyond the Roman gate

train speeds
from Hand's manor
from the pen of Hyle
under bridges over London Fields
along water systems & marshes
(secret glimpses into one-bulb kitchens)
turns north beyond the Danish border

Cambridge produced (or drew to itself)
the articulators of Albion's pain

there are names. You know the names
You do not know them, it doesn't matter

who translated life into language
'to mitigate
the injurious sway
of place or circumstance'

'a stylistic situation on the periphery'

worked through the word, worked the word out

lost;
everything goes into the stockpot

Skofeld smiles, they disappear

insects of flame congeal in iconic shields
risk is etched, surgeon acts on unsubstantiated charts

'less tuneable than bees'
they fear, they fear
'an ear that could measure a just cadence,
& scan without articulating; rather nice & humorous

in what was tolerable, than patient
to read every drawing versifier;'
they are food, ascend
(like *Metropolis*) into the maw

but it is not destruction they record

and with Skofeld always is Private Kox
a gross turnip-head who swills
Southern Comfort (RED EYE); breaks wind & vases,
an importer of soiled
Hibernian limericks, drink dribbler,
claret-bib uniform unbuttoned
lights
his cigar with holograph scores of Vorticist operas

Skofeld has to tread with care
the body aura protects him
but a single crude syntactic error
could puncture the body shield
let out the real person who is gone
let the fears in;
accident,
the head-on smashing of big motors

diesel nerve offends his nostril
the root hairs shiver

'in a small chamber hung with dusty green,
sitting in an elbow chair, & dressed
neatly in black; pale, but not
cadaverous; his hands & fingers
gouty & with chalk stones'

Skofeld sprawls back;
black
emphasises the sallow poison of his liver,
white wrists,
understands the message of the stars is disease –
they talk fire in accelerating genetic code
they cause the blood race
travel the pillars of his tongue
so that he speaks in marble

'gorgeous eloquence'

afloat on the sea cradle of perfect pitch,
rhythmic pendulum,
from dead moss to charged crown,
swings closer like Poe's blade
to the exposed chest,
folded chaos crouches at the window,
not to be admitted,
though summoned by unconscious ceremony
(Kox is its manifestation)
'beast frenzy'
with eye of hawk & paw of dog,
snake flesh, feathered cheek
'incumbencies most awful, visitings'
shaft the page
that wall of verse curves round his spine; support
attractive & opaque, the glittering screen
'community with highest truth'
confession of the sharpest doubt

as he cuts the stem
an alternate reading
breaks down the moon wind
time manipulation as secret of death
to count up the beads of the web
shuffle them at will
(the seeds)

beware of the sun

he guards the sleeping snake
he will not rouse him in the spine
his black corduroy
will filter out the savage rays

he's often sick
hoards what he has

Kox strangles a dog; shoots the heads
off the gentians;
Beat Generation gives him stomach cramps
shock treatment tickles his toe

autumn days, school's out
beware the cottages
Lake District
& all roads south:
the Equinox

Ripper sharpens his cheese knife

'Devildom first, poetising afterwards'

who is he? mortal, wandering scholar
condemned
possessed all down the line (by what he knows)
'the very palace of the winds'
Skofeld was Milton, Coleridge,
Wordsworth, Crowley, Powys, James
and all the rest,
solitary,
a continuing band of responsibility
here, this town
'courts, cloisters, flocks of churches,
gateways, towers:
migration strange'
entrapment, under long water skies

the moment of self-recognition of powers

(. . . 'And this, precisely, is what Sherlock Holmes did. He became a freshman of Gonville & Caius. Cambridge, as it had done many times before in its close-on-a-thousand year history, was again showing the way; indicating the pattern' . . .)

the other man's word upon his tongue
the other man's work to continue
cantor chants in deep bone
'Fraternitas Sancti Sepulchri'
alien buds force his jaws apart

the heresy: to speak, break silence
Trinity, Caius, King's
is the vital fork
that buttresses this unstable field;

King's College Chapel is heavily coded,
in numerical bondage (see Pennick: *The Mysteries of . . .*)
so that James D. Watson
'staring up at the gothic pinnacles'
is speeded, fed back, shoved into light;
who earlier had fetched the horse's steaming heart
from fen plain abattoir
to submit to x-ray crystallography
to find the facet'd clue, the irreducible:
the key is the shadow of the door, a template
from which the work is done, the dark unlocked

because of the shape the thought moves faster
crushed & remade to form the TETRAHEDRON;
the eye is not needed, the body
put out to pasture,
they plug hot
into seething Templar sockets

worm drives down into the buried mystery

fenland peiste
they serve & oppose, both, they pay

so octagon Ely is the dragon's cast

'the hallowed fire of his altar,
to touch & purify the lips of whom he pleases'

Kox is, of course, the Cambridge rapist
it is painted on his skull
a JEKYLL & HYDE the *Mirror* calls him –
how does he
get into these bedsit rooms
of dressing-gown sleep, curlers, lino, woolly slippers
how does he
slide through locked doors
a superhuman lust:
Kox wears a false beard

'Skofeld arch'd over the Moon at midnight . . .
scattering her leprous snows in flakes of
disease over Albion . . .
whose pen no other hand dare touch'

Skofeld never stirs, he sits
eyes compute the text in columns,
arabic nose edits the infelicities of diction –
Kox is less than an odour
at work again & close to murder
dips his paw in face cream
cigarettes in coffee cups, *Play Bach*
Penguin Verlaine
Kox rapes the Hobbit, mops up
on terrytowel

geomantically aligned, west/east
that magnetic route (A30/A10)

atlantic mother current

LAND'S END . . CROWS-AN-WRA . . BURYAS BRI . . LONG ROCK . .
(ST MICHAEL'S MOUNT TO SEAWARD) . . LUDGVAN . . CROWLAS . .
3 BURROWS . . BROWN WILLY . . DARTMOOR . . FIRE STONE CROSS . .
EXETER . . CREWKERNE . . MONTACUTE (& POWYS) TO THE LEFT . .
EAST COKER (& ELIOT) TO THE RIGHT . . BABYLON HILL . .
SHERBORNE . . SHAFTESBURY . . LUDWELL . . WINDMILLL HILL . .
CHISELBURY CAMP . . SALISBURY . . OLD SARUM (LEFT) . .
FIGSBURY RINGS . . BASINGSTOKE . . DEATH IN HOUNSLOW . .
RIVER CONNECTION . . PUSH ON UP THE KINGSLAND ROAD . .
STOKE NEWINGTON (POE, WILSON, ABNEY PARK TO LEFT) . .
ROYSTON HEATH . . CAMBRIDGE . . ELY . . DOWNHAM MARKET . .
WITCH FIRE . . KING'S LYNN . . THE WASH

the secret is revealed

Kox had his finger
around the trigger of Skofeld's blasphemy

lore of the Cosmos was being unravelled
obscure studies
the waft of ancient texts sifted

'the Center, unapproachable for ever,
the Vegetative Universe opens like a flower'

Kox had observed the ritual candle-pickings
the micrometer mensurations
the columns of strict fingers

Skofeld speaks treason against the edifice
of law, the hierarchies of nature;
offends the sharp angle
flatters the curve,

hones language to preternatural accuracies

Kox had lain
under the rhododendron
drunk, Kox had listened

but Skofeld will triumph, disembodied
become figure, become essence,
a patch of cloud, a blue aroma
an accident on Trumpington Street
a shift in the curtain
Skofeld is become his word

Kox devours it,
& cannot evacuate the agony
Kox ends in the garden (Mantegna not Bellini)
a clot of anguish
coughing among the beanshoots
a gross body
the maggots rework the *Book of Kells*
within his skull pan
they lay out the vortical city
along the plain of his cortex
('the Plain called Ease')
they worship the serpent
down the length of his spine

Kox is become a floating bestiary

the word devours the beast
as the fig devoured the donkey

the word devours the world

'I had got from Cambridge what I wanted'
Aleister Crowley, *The Confessions of*

COBAN, THE UNKNOWN, THE UNKNOWABLE

Coban, the unknown, the unknowable
without name, without face
invisible over the land, all powerful
his death assumed, unannounced

Coban, divided into manifold
carved figures of lesser dignitaries
smaller names, fractions
squared roots of his meaning;
Coban on the north porch of Exeter Cathedral
three incisor copes, open jaw
pegged white,
stick bearing molars
to look into his mouth, to gum his ancestry

saints, angels & kings usurp his glory
are reduced,
decay in the air of the west front
sucked by tourist camera leeches

in Coban all of this,
the triangle:
Canterbury, Chichester, Wells (through Salisbury),
narrow wedge that encloses his title, encloses Winchester
80 miles by 80 miles by 160, his power

Coban across the south
is a language we cannot discover;
we are in awe, & bend the neck

he is older
than the fingers, the collapsed spires,
the circles, the earthworks
older than the ice trail, the treeless frozen ground
older than temperature, older than the idea of sun

Coban is the disguise,
his life
is discovering what he was, & will be

the great flaw, the driven continuity of evidence

A Biographical Sketch

'You should beware of those who knew him: they will tell you so much you will just die of it.'
J. H. Prynne, *Lecture on Maximus, 4,5,6*

'just across the road John Milton got his . . .'

Like Maximus, like Milton
'Secretary for Foreign Tongues'
black, the son of Los,
black sun;
at sea, the land his dream
Coban did not long leave
his home,
travelled as a sop to melancholy
& only into a local cultural extension
say, Switzerland
Venice
I mean the older canal
necrophile sleep
of undersea images dredged up
mating of sea & shore, god disguised as seabeast
swimming by open windows
resting in mosaic, in font water
in gold tesserae,
in blue divinity

Coban's sleep rhythms anchored

(Coban's Eyes are out, his Angels)

never, truly, upon Ocean
was landlocked in time
in time of war
bolted to himself, his body image
so that ocean was a vengeance of liquid fire
a boundless giant
bed of sickles, moon scythes
Coban suffered
the fluctuations, in blindness
conjured the dim heat
hellfire,
knuckle pressed against eye-ball
to raise the White Light;
Coban constructed vast
architectures, sub-polar cities
his place, here
the flooded crypt of Winchester

child of Ely, water taught
in the spring of his ear;
to come home was his whole journey

'head & hands lopt off
in his own Temple'

each step backwards into earth
and into absolute darkness
the voice moves
he is chained to the rock
he heaps stones onto his chest
this is his beast of the churches
crocodile ancestor
a machine to understand
the stars
to mediate between worms & gods
a time platform

a bender of light
a compressor of histories
a land plain
a stone library
a cave of policy
a place that is, literally
out of time

see the clouds break & swerve
to avoid this ground
the concealed roots lock the land to the building

THE PROCESS, & HOW

Coban possessed Hand
it should be known
Coban dead in his grave
        Hand
passing his church excursion
to that city;
                it was the spirit of Coban,
the unfulfilled desires
that lit Hand,
the radiant meat of canopic jars
that flattered
& fashioned Hand's evil

what Coban thought, Hand did

the cancelled urge is immortal
Hand looked down from Catherine's Hill
& saw the Church in water meadow
Hand sucked Coban's gauntleted fist

this way the land operates
the room-spells of Coban
('mysterious wisdom won by toil')
are acted out in Whitechapel & in Bow,
in Hoxton, Poplar, Stamford Hill

the idea that Coban buried
is a scream in the night
in the toilet of a gambling den

('First Reggie slung me a few right-handers, then Ronnie slung me one, & all of a sudden one of the henchmen slips Reggie a tool . . . & I wound up in hospital for about three days with a hundred & ten stitches in my face')

one single tenement light
muffled late in drawn curtains

the art of Coban
is become
the frowning eyebrow of Hand

Coban strives to untie
the knot that his own life
has constructed

it cannot be a great chinese wall

it keeps nothing out, is circular
where the ghosts extend his lyrics

THE QUEST:

they search, unsuccessfully, for the name & location of Coban. They walk from Winchester to Salisbury; by way of Romsey, King's Garn Gutter, Verwood, Knowlton Circles, Gussage Hill, Acking Dyke & Grim's Ditch.

feeding the wind & fed by it
(lapwing, roebuck & dog)
an open-mouthed immortality
over tenanted ground
to swallow the habits of another land
understand the soul is not separate
but the badge & essence of all this meat

(the crow, the crow)

to fling the stick down
the wind abates
take coffee & wait for a train
in the Station Café
with tame, out-of-town, Angels

the stick flowers
wind tears off the seed & tumbles
its alphabet over the cliff

we learn to wait; drowning in jukebox eruptions

at the Church door; bells, distant operations

Easter Sunday morning

The Quest, 2nd Path:
they walk again; beyond Winchester to Chichester & Felpham.
Coban is further than ever before.

Coban's bird is flown is gone
scythe among clouds,
is turned
the hands enclosing skull hearth are gone
are lifted, away, are translated

hovering hawkspan at cross path

Coban bends to find a stone
natural *shabti* form
blood blister,
pierced bone
among yew root, Goosehill Camp
wood slope
Coban's bird is not pressing
wing in delicacy over the crown
of his head
& they look at him
a blankness, a whiteness of waters
baptism, Paraclete, resuscitation,
possession by spirit;
the seance with vegetal voices
is gone

there is no entrance
the skull plastered over
the gate sealed

Coban turns to the sun

down slopes to the spire of Chichester
the spire falls

Coban's road is flint & rubble
Coban sleeps on a sharpness of chalk
Coban's bird is gone

is discovering along these ridges
deposits of some future self
the cathedrals of Chichester & Selsey
will continue to forge a third
& invisible
cone of worship
a funnel of voices ascending out of
the range of hearing
his frustration eats into the ground
acid root spiral
to conjure Milton, to poison Blake's optic nerve

the groin'd shore,
Butlinland
'first Vision of Light'

'In Felpham I heard & saw the Visions of Albion'

Coban in pyramid of sun shock
over distant Chichester spire
as glimpsed Sunday morning November 9, 1975
Coban the architect of steps
Coban the spastic
jerking through Felpham, wrong frame speed
deceiving the eye
Coban out over Selsey Bill
Coban shelters in St Wilfred's Chapel
Coban's word incomplete
Coban's bird is flown up & gone
the fasts wasted the tracked miles of hill ridge, Downsway
the bound tree copse in ploughed field
Coban in gunshot
Coban over pasture land

incomplete, aching for entrance

Coban the shell
walks down
to sea strand, the dull margin
winter light, bingo, poodle parlour
clock golf, oil stain

Coban's bird climbs into sun hut
& claws for victim
the heroic life against all reflex
the battled visionary of Lambeth

what is the price
to survive these places

banks of sand, the shore is swallowed

BLADUD OF BATH

in which Bladud, the Hyperborean Apollo, flies & falls

why Bladud wants to fly
shift the Memory Empire
the empirical block of vein rivers
mapped to interior heat source
this lamb-cap'd son of Coban (of Lud)
this Bath man
sprung out of fallen masonry
the toad
fell *from* earth, fell upright
into air, out of nothing
(before I was I was everywhere)

Bladud the son the imagination
of Coban's virginity, the spark
struck from his anvil
the shining
weighted horn of his imagining
mind
Bladud fell on his face into the ground
twin peaks of dead hair, rubber eyes
The Man who Fell to Earth
whispered through by star ghost musicians
the dog bitten in the thigh by glass
chemical dyes staining the pale meat sinew

the elevator of instinct
flies
bent, to fetch knowledge back
the bird lost of Coban was Bladud
Bath was his place
where he decayed
coming, unnaturally, by other
darker hands

was the medicine in the spring
was the mineral in the water

Coban's bird: the arrow at the sun
the impotent black snake case

MAKING

'the chief Ensign of Druidism was a Ring . . .
such Ornaments of the Hand
. . . may be justly supposed to have had virtues to them . . .
& from thence to have proved the Origin of the Snake Rings'

through space beyond the wheel or ring
that isn't there
then is because we say it is
or else the ring is space
& all the rest is plural, unknown
or time,
the ring is the hand is time

Hand is made to fit the ring
Hand thickens to fill the made space
Hand's particles, variously, seed time

'I am as big as God but not so wicked'

Coban laid out Canterbury & Winchester
Shaftsbury on the Mount of the Shaft
'where the eagle prophesied the fate of Britain'
these steeples measured, scaled
from his recumbent generative organ

'I copulated with my fist': & Bladud was born

'I ejaculated into my own mouth': & Bladud
emerged from my side;
'I copulated with my fist, my heart came to me'

without consort, of my ribs, made progeny
what pain, what rending stretching & tearing out;
conceived, hard, from a lust for this land

where Coban loved himself, the waters,
Bladud was the foam, the pond scum,
was the unguent, was mud
Bath's medicinal spring & cash flow,
hot house Roman luxuries, splinters of tile
sauna vices, massage parlour curtains
fur gloves

the wolf-wounded sheep added their pus
their blood to the water
& were healed,
scab mouth closed;
the Regency dames
sip'd in dainty cup, themselves unwashed:
the pig water of Bladud,
his magical
swine fever cures

THE CUT MAN

'I understand now your passion to face the West. It is the passion for the extinction of yourself & the knowledge of the triumph of your own will *in your body's extinction. But in the great periods, when man was great, he faced the* East.'

Bladud there now, cold sperm of Coban,
regent, déclassé, restaurateur in black
satin boilersuit, wealth on paper
folded man
masturbated with clutch of peony leaves;
the tit button chewed like peyotl,
throat
of varnished scarlet; window grid printing on his back
this Bath hotel room of Coleridge, fear sweat nightmare
travelling west, sun-stepping, going
to meet his death more than half way

Bladud emblazoned on best-selling timber
recycled sperm map,
cut man
of Casablanca, over Severn Bridge
with cassette wraparound fur set,
over wrinkled skin water,
fallen man
of coal-tongued angel brand, Bladud;
no further distance for this blood
to travel, Lud son, stone brother,
Lear father, spraying, helmet of butterflies,
thunder switch,
pulls the wand,

joystick, up, tilts back
over his own head, upset, disorientated
fly-walk deafens him . . .
Coban's permafrost bitterness,
no son, no more, Edda-bled
sorrow of saga already completed;
keening
landwave scours the ear channel, winds of the north

& this is why, the reason
Coban's arrow enters the gull's throat,
full head prophecy chokes him with cresting scum,
& red fist,
Coban shafts time,
his sin
makes love to itself; blackman, negative
leper son, flakes out, peels
like a grape without blood, this is why
Coban possesses the fist of the future
steps through the time edict
this is why Coban insists, *does* go blind
go forward, unseen
Coban the past pursuing him
grips our throat
in sleep
is Coban, opens our chest
is Coban entering the gape mouth
of the exhausted lover,
is Coban
feeding the will, is Coban
fertilising death is Coban

the crowned gene; projected arrow-path of divination &
flight

THE FLIGHT, THE PROPHECY, THE SUICIDE

'And afterwarde a Fetherham he dight
To flye with wynges, as he could best discerne
About the ayre nothyng hym to werne
He flyed on high to the temple Apolyne
And ther brake his neck, for al his great doctrine.'

Bladud, the whore of wild ducks,
migrant
of the flocks, flight secrets, lusts
moon compass;
services the beast necks, feather-deck'd
Marienbad lethargy,
jongleur, bell man
fool of the geese over frozen lake chain

pine forests, the magnetic
rock path,
by lodestone, hung meat,
rattler
Bladud in fishnet tights & goose quills

quits the cabaret, paints his face
spits against the wind of polar promptings

on that grass-stripped island
a monk's
weather-raw fingers inscribe the skin page
with quill pen & plant-juice, squeezed dye

the shadow of Bladud lights the codex

eagerly, eagerly
spine worn outside,
ribs traced on the drum of his chest
head, thorax, abdomen
antennae quivers with message

day of flight, the colourless blood,
clinging to leaf peak,
hillside,
hang glide Bladud, emasculate
queen of ants
launched by west winds,
an unknown journey

high above chalk, the Dragon
not yet taken its horse disguise;
horse surrogate, the hide tent
king mound, dew pond
damp sacrifice

Bladud afloat, in pride,
driven east
at mercy of older energies

over Tain River, royal Bladud
diaphanous wing span
dips
swoops low, the alone
the swollen, filled with ancestors

wind failing, Lud Gate
the stiff male primacy of his feathers

White Mount, falling
the earth a new sky
falling on him,
sinking
knees drawn up,
hollow case stuffed with earth grain

this place, Bladud

gnaws wing for sustenance

the mischievous ants, link'd progeny
tunnel out
into the orifices of City
into bank loan, mortgage, capital gain

the computed eye, the invisible transfer

a long death, antler'd prince

his slow millenial changes

'. . . circumscribed the oracular Cave of the Pythian God with a Row of Pillars that formed the Octostyle Monopterick Temple, fabled by the Grecians to have been erected by PTERAS with Wax & the Wings of the Bees APOLLO had brought from the Hyperborean Regions . . .'

when Bladud tried to breach
the labyrinth of Brute
at Troja Nova
he fell into a sun trap
Temple of Apollo
was smashed, his crust shattered

or is this the first great Suicide
to open the Bridge,
to offer himself, split spine,
pink
crab-meat to the sun's fork:
skull shell bowed to the white city stones

is his journey from the west
mantic,
like Chatterton, a word to unravel

whose lion cloak was visible
only on death couch

as a shade-beard of denied maturity,
a stubble rising on the grey flesh,
a hard shape in the eye jelly;
thwart aviator blocked by his own ceiling
not able to climb through his limits;
defined as he dies, myth sick

his god, the dragon,
a crocodile on stilts,
he never mentioned, never 'knew'
conjured Lear
to fill the circle of his madness:
was revenged in daughters & in storm

'consecrating the Hills that continue the Curve Line on the back of CAMALODUNUM from the SW to Haul Down'

the matter of Britain hails iron pegs

his best, for a thousand years, betrayed
in ley lines, maze & trench

the cromlech mocks, remains

SKOFELD & 'THE GREAT WORK'

'The words of the poet / the equations of the physicist.'
E.F. Stringer (*Star People*)

SICK SICK. YELLOW. Not citrine; bile. Waste flooding the pore, escaping. Odours of corruption & sanctity. Pellucid. Skin clear over the bones. The layers of protection invisible. Skofeld is a hologram of himself. Scarcely present. Avatar of uncorruptible essence.

'How can so sick a people rise up?'

Skofeld on his couch, untroubled by horsehair lacerations, by the earth's orbital shift through darkness. This (time) is the crunch. Unhooked from body spasm, calculating will broken into numbers. A far excellence of pure detail. Lost in it. Abandoned. Bliss? Wings in the stone, remote signs, languages. The fossil & the exposed process. Skofeld has scorched the ceiling. Fire-black above the pounding mind. Recruitment of internal suns. Blood clots. Coagulant drugs. The blood, halted in its flux, thickens towards crystal. The eyes are shell, holding off the light. His etheric body is scorched & hairless, flaking. Exile.

More like the Pope than God: he *is* infallible. God isn't, makes mistakes, this life, commits lies; not Skofeld. He is beyond the human, & its magnification, which is God, the amplified light. Keeps the island lit. His spared Georgics drive the generator. Overdrawn intelligence devours the will towards action. Absorbs the spill of acolytes. His flame cannot be divided by blade or laser.

Now suspects that if the Devil (Asmodeus, Rex Mundi), if

incarnate matter, had a forwarding address it was here, Cambridge. And his work was the construction of absorbent mirrors, the self-swallowing opposition, where the image (the corrupt) is reversed, the meaning reversed, the entrapment realised. Using, naturally, the same power circuits; admitting to his chart the same rules of colour. He was the Devil's shadow. The previous. Where the Devil had just been. This was his movement, to push one heart-beat ahead, to anticipate, cancel.

Of course, the Devil does not actually live in Cambridge. And who can blame him. His ground-contacts are elsewhere, & not to be named: but his front-office, his wall plaque, surely, yes. Among the colleges & cloisters. An active negation, a swarming nothing, nothing breeding nothing: 'smell of rottenness, marsh-stagnancy.' Zone of the cancelled. Erased highs. Nimbic decay: where

'contour values represent smoothed (mathematically filtered) total force magnetic anomalies in gammas above a linear field equation based on computer filtering of anomaly values selected on a regular grid. Positive anomaly levels in red, negative in blue.'

Cambridge, negative. Cambridge, low. The Ramsey–Cambridge–Ely triangle holding a zero-float that will expand & overlay them, or contract & suck them in. The Devil's breath. The veins of water. The mounds, the Templar memorial powers. And now the laboratories. This Skofeld knew.

He had been informed by charged madmen in the streets: how the secret Atman shrines were abandoned & the mysteries scattered . . . crazed talk . . . Hitler, under Steiner's instruction, sowing the oven ashes of the Jews, the alchemised essence, that they never return to the fatherland; it ended with the firing of the Manhattan projectile. The new initiates are walled into the protection of colleges: physicist, geneticist, star-man, surgeon. Only Skofeld can penetrate their language. Access means death. Death, illumination. Nothing. Living.

'The Older You Get the More Time Collapses'

Douglas Fairbanks Jnr's corporate wisdom
broadcasts a truth he knows more than others

the physicist chuckles,
antimatter soup, high table gossip;
as Skofeld taps his brow
listens to the water flow in the bone,
neurocranial splashback:

they are deep into telekinesis,
brain screen transmission,
silent, generous
skull to skull exchanges

a newt of port & saliva
slides from the corner of
the old man's mouth;
thyroid-denied
cretinism, smiles wide, tooth mush

Skofeld's consciousness
is out; physicist
is approaching *new* levels of meaning

out of the word fix

Space is propositional
take it as an equation, a model
where local stars are trapped

to smooth our fear –
Consciousness enters the sum
with speed-writing finger

(FLIGHTS TO THE SUN MAY BE DELAYED)

beyond this first helmet everything
is theoretical, do you see
the excitement
the stars are our abacus
mark the flight path,
death of
idea trail
as we come into speed we see
the end before the beginning
the thread to trace
in any every direction
the chemist will tell you,
infinite
reductions, infinite expansions
idea: trigger
the whole thing planned in the cortex
rare degeneration
opening up the star chest
planned: committed

do you see it? the idea

even Skofeld's grip is slipping
the dialogue line is stretched too tight
he begins not to 'see' it
it begins not to be there
physicist is changing into numbers
a chair of graph nails
a float of needles
it is getting away

the stars were the names of the beasts
god mouth disguised

'The Older You Get the More Time Collapses'

Douglas Fairbanks Jnr's corporate wisdom
broadcasts a truth he knows more than others

the physicist chuckles,
antimatter soup, high table gossip;
as Skofeld taps his brow
listens to the water flow in the bone,
neurocranial splashback:

they are deep into telekinesis,
brain screen transmission,
silent, generous
skull to skull exchanges

a newt of port & saliva
slides from the corner of
the old man's mouth;
thyroid-denied
cretinism, smiles wide, tooth mush

Skofeld's consciousness
is out; physicist
is approaching *new* levels of meaning

out of the word fix

Space is propositional
take it as an equation, a model
where local stars are trapped

to smooth our fear –
Consciousness enters the sum
with speed-writing finger

(FLIGHTS TO THE SUN MAY BE DELAYED)

beyond this first helmet everything
is theoretical, do you see
the excitement
the stars are our abacus
mark the flight path,
death of
idea trail
as we come into speed we see
the end before the beginning
the thread to trace
in any every direction
the chemist will tell you,
infinite
reductions, infinite expansions
idea: trigger
the whole thing planned in the cortex
rare degeneration
opening up the star chest
planned: committed

do you see it? the idea

even Skofeld's grip is slipping
the dialogue line is stretched too tight
he begins not to 'see' it
it begins not to be there
physicist is changing into numbers
a chair of graph nails
a float of needles
it is getting away

the stars were the names of the beasts
god mouth disguised

'degradation, destruction, revocation, infamy,
dishonour, loss, with the variants & analogues of these'

milk eye on tentacle stalk is
bruised & rolled by star-wave;
cut by the pack-ice, punctured
as the vision stutters & flirts with darkness

think it, see it
tell you with my death,
                the energy
used once only
physicist is laughing, dead in his chair
his laugh opens the first wound in Skofeld's neck

lets the first light out;
dust cartwheeling among the beech trees

INSECT

insect
('Mantis' they call him, or 'Fly')
is witness, key
to the whole matter

the alchemist writes:
'Do not allow even an insect
to be in the room where you are working'

insect is the observer,
turning the field
of consciousness, Third Eye, agent of
the paranormal, telecosmic, superspace;
mover, destroyer
embalmed in retrospective time fluids

devours aphid collaborators, living
as they scale the stem,
as they climb
they are eaten;
insect works the nuclear equation
what is needed,
additional,
is unattached consciousness
this insect gives,
eye in armour,
the winged eye of Egypt
energy, metamorphosis,

change,
is locked within this disguised system.

Skofeld had his number,
& the reflected hum of his own sin,
code-breaker, the unseal'd lips,
aware that insect is the final
stitch in the triangle;
(E.I.A.E.)
completes the crystalline screen

insect is an avatar of death, knows sees,
moves here & in the field
of planetary wash:
is alien & immediate

put out the eye of insect with heated needles,
cut his brain knob, hack off
his informing tongue,
butcher his signalling hooks

Skofeld is violence; prisons insect
in the tomb of quantum literature,
adds this small measure of cannibalised liquid
as a period, or symbol,
to the ink'd reductions of Munich alchemies

is insect the voice of physicist
whose throbbing chant
is the immortality
of smoothed calculation, pure sign as language
invisible
silent seizure, life & death hungers

miniaturised, our Minotaur is
faulting the web trap
battering the light bulb

insect re-enters Skofeld's stream under the finger nail

& then the silence, 'the preparation of darkness'

'THE ENEMY OF THE STARS'

'He demonstrated all the formulae. After coming to the end of geometry, he applied himself to algebra . . . said later that the Goddess Namagiri had helped him to solve the most complicated problems. Alone & single-handed he had mastered & outstripped the mathematical achievements of a whole civilisation . . . was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society, & to a Fellowship at Trinity College, Cambridge. He lived in a world of numbers. It is impossible to express in simple terms the nature of his discoveries, which had to do with the most mysterious properties of numbers. While at Cambridge he . . . formed a small library & a card-index of all sorts of phenomena that did not admit of a rational explanation.'

Skofeld reversed
Olson's claim for Melville
that he
'pushed back so far he turned time into space'
Skofeld pushed so fast
he turned space into time

PLUS: 'intelligence' is a distortion of time
on his bunsen,
it is as crude as that,
smell
the wet peat-bog in the flame;
he heats the glass rod,
time is forced to leap & dance,
turned
on itself, again & back,
inhuman
repetitions of alchemy;
dusty lab coat on a nail in the door,

his school notebook
black backed;
neat figures in ink, notes finalised
by the firmness of the script, the acid clarity

thus he cracks it:
you don't need the Rutherford Institute, the Cavendish
or anything as vulgar as calculus
i.e. Lovecraft was *right*
with his cod
'post-Euclidean calculus'
his 'starry window'
'shining trapezohedron'
'window on all time & space'

pedants are outmanoeuvred
if time is
in any way understood
as an adjunct of architecture:

now you are moving towards it

rainy hands press the window back

in four separated panels:
fox, chicken's foot, old woman & cup

between the stars
black spawn of the dead
intelligence projecting its luminosity earthwards
living clouds
pawing the light crystal,
sharp moments are swallowed
language here is necessarily imprecise
but accurate
true is vague, the brain emits a rich
juice of its emptiness

honeysuckle trace odour
through uninhabited places,
hoof star frozen
on flay'd skins
of unfinished calculation

Skofeld has lost physicist
sends words in search of his dust

Skofeld knew his power ended
where the page
curled in bonfire
was swallowed back into swamp
where ink broke off its irritation on skin & cell
physicist's power swept through
not inside limits
not inside
the rock case, or the ice
deep as
what is known

the ant configurations
of physicist's post-mortem humour
climbing on ladders of the dead,
piercing the night,
unlocking
the secrets of triple-stars, black holes
reversing forward

all the old used dreams
die in the skin crease
of Skofeld's seeing

the sentence, unfinished, hooks itself
over the picture rail
like the shed skin
of Marie Jeanette Kelly
like the cured trophies

of hieratic python jewellery

with Skofeld the glitter of despair
the crystal dissolving slowly in his ear

'Finally, in raising mathematical thought to its highest degree of abstraction, man perceives that such thought is not perhaps his exclusive property. He discovers that insects, for example, seem to possess a special sense which we lack, that there is, perhaps, such a thing as a universal mathematical intelligence, & that out of the totality of all living things emerges a Voice which is the Voice of the Supreme Master-Mind . . .'

'Masters of the Universe'

BENEATH BRASS, BONE: THE PROPHECY OF SLADE, THE FATE OF ENGLAND

'Thus to burst Death's membrane through – slog beyond – not float in appalling distances'

A MAN'S HEAD in a plastic bag. The enclosing darkness confirmed by the further wrapping of a woollen balaclava. At rest. The cold floor of a urinal stall. Placed, & by his own volition; facing West. It is the prophetic, the head of Slade. Thin hair, slicked with sugar-water, caps the skull. The cranial folds licked into order, sweetness seeps through as slow energy poison, domestic syrups strangling the sources of fire. What word is left, what impulse, what charge towards light, what plant opening on the tongue: whatever is left in this island, among the moistures of the dead, the distilled wisdoms, find entrance in this cave of darkness, this bone machine sealed into its glassy skin.

Climbing with the sun, at choice, out along the rim of Isla's Dune: Penton Street, Barnsbury Road, to where Richmond Avenue dips & surges to the West. The redshift into haze, cold Highgate, woods filtered blue, retreating, distance enlarging, the folding of morning, place chosen, witness to this confession. Slade has no place, all curvature, smooth everywhere, one circumstance of thought meeting itself. The agreed location allows us to describe, to put limits on infinite extensions of rhetoric. This is the chosen exterior. The hutment, wayside shrine. Among trees: 'the public lavatory.' But the interior will not serve. Too surgical, tight. Slade chooses instead the setting of the Islington High Street dug-out with its fine brass, its water-tanks, its length. The

sound of water running over weathered marble, drip of green silurian swamp, glass too cold to touch, aquarium silence inducing the urge towards pious confession. It is here that the final effort must be made.

The head must make a communication necessary beyond torso. It is charged & live, hot, with the grey electric tortures of garages, nails in the tongue, genital spark, scored skin, bruises spreading & bursting, cosmetic preparation for the death of the body. The swallowed teeth & pains, tyre manufacturer's name appended to the spread beaver & satin pin'd-up flesh, bubble the high pink into his mouth; the chainsaw hacks through his arteries, he is released; bone burns into charcoal, fat spatters their varnished boots. The corpse could now be scattered, his finites, definitively, split. Found floating. The torso sinks into river mud. The legs hang white in local tides, adhering to the pole of fish totems, the raw mush. But the head is free to speak: all muddy obstructions cleared. Garrulous in this new freedom. The mouth is all word, the lips quiver. This marvellous trophy is exhibited, secretly, behind the closed doors of East End pubs: the Crown & Dolphin, the Carpenter's Arms, the Old Horns, the Seven Stars. Moves on to the South Coast, back into Essex. A triumph, a tribal score paid. Smoked pink in the flame of igniting Panatellas, Whiffs, Wintermans. The scattered limbs, & knuckles, fingers rap out accusations at low tide, in shale graves & fox-holes, in urban woodland, in concrete, in refuse, across horizons the fragments connect. The word is forged, the wisdoms focused.

The episode that is & was Slade he is reluctant to conclude, to close down, until the word, whose ghost he is, has been spoken; a word as substantial as that ghost of a flea, & gleaming, now, in pristine urgency. He is the victim of his own family. Now & for ever. Advancing entropy. Incapable of expressing his essence or escaping from it.

He is immune to the touch of the wind that destroyed him, though if he comes physically into contact with even the shadow of a dog he is gone. Scarcely there. His conviction less than a rumour. A low glimmer, a star burnt in lime.

His notion of the universe is moving backwards, snail-

like, into the cave of origin, the only possible instigation or source of energy. The explosion, the drama, the moment of death. Energy that was the destruction of his previous self. So his birth is out of willed suicide. He died in a mirror, funnelling through, as time reversed, made way for him. Slade realises that he is infinitely attached to that point of extinction, all his motive force, before & after, comes from this fountain. The conic section is smooth, allows for irregularities, singularities, bends, shifts, faults. All that he has, & is, flattens, tubes out, into wire, elongates. The words stretch into colours, streaming back into his eyes. Implosion reversed, as on film. The severed head is lit by this knowledge. For there to be Time there must be Event, & someone using it, no other description possible: without action, no time. No forward.

Seizure. The knuckles of his lost hand make this the eternally repeating moment. The one place is stressed into a fan of frozen sequences. Place is never the same. The moment is enacted, over & over, in invisibly varied locations. An imagined Wall of Brass, an urge to protect this island, is being forged from Slade's knuckles. The pins pulse red. The charge runs into his creased fingers where the great east-moving ley crosses the old forest; Shelley's Hill, Debden Slade ('Deadman's Slade'), with Genesis Slade half a mile to the north, the scald marks of his mother's tartan rug. His name precedes him into the map, his death; cold wind streaming into his nostril.

The dead, frozen at their event horizon, strike, like vipers, through the ring of frost, the same crimes not quite completed; leer from behind the protection of their elders – the oak, the beech, the hornbeam, birch, maple, blackthorn & common crab, bird cherry, goat willow & butcher's broom.

And postulated, in eternal opposition, is the Head of Brass, the fate of the island, buried with Bran at the White Mount, lost. The head manufactured by Friar Bacon, whose climax was the sole imperative, 'Time Is' – unable to reach beyond naked description. A man-made industrial thing,

metal worked, mined, purified, animated by female secretions; back of the skull resonant to Europe's cargo, interior fed with local knowledge.

The process of this new oracle is mummification, out of time, the leather'd scalp of Slade. Behind him, & through the forest, the fen, the coast, is that ancient miracle, the Wall, the unseen guardian of value. It is pegged & gated by those high consciousnesses situated in the East of England, those wills, those animators of the actual, hidden in Cambridge, Brightlingsea, London, curving through to Sussex. They are set into the wall. The wall is their stance, & the connection between them, the spread. They concentrate their attention on the skull & urge it to speech, articulation. The dried lips move. Its own impulse is another, & opposing, thing. It speaks out of the corruption of the city. It breaks language out of wound & curse.

Slade's aborted syllabic urge has its analogue in the spasms of graffiti-scribblers. It boils too fast for his mouth, is a solar dictate, shafting from the loins, where no loins are. The way they hurl those frantic messages onto the brick. Slade suffers it, no means of writing; he erupts in adrenalin skin colour change, muscles twitch in his cheek. No sound to be heard. The excess spills, mixes with, the voices of Borley, slogans on the walls of bunkers, begging letters in urinals. No blood travels to his eye.

He is romantic & reactionary as are all the spiritually ambitious souls. His point-of-view, curiously, remains almost six feet from the ground & does not fall to his new sack-in-the-corner position. The merciless & predatory ear of Joe Orton flaps in his face, damp, like a bat, unsatisfied, haunting these tiles for a short eternity, furry with blood mat hair, sharp with splinters of bone. He reads on the brick-word: NF FUCKS MEN. And is not displeased. Belief in visionary release through action, any action that breaks the chain of inertia. Sodomy. Fascism. The Heroes do not want to keep everything as it is – but to make it as it was in Myth Time, which never happened, but which is happening now as they strike the first surrogate blow.

Feet tread down the dead faces into the yielding earth, the leaves, crisp skins flattened, nothing feels. Only aware of a limb as the pain climbs through it, mind among the high trees, the gathering clouds. He treads, with a satisfaction like tobacco, on these mounds & herbal plains. He crushes.

The skull rolls, polarised, caught between opposing magnetic fields. Did it have hair? It did. Each hair a thought, a spine, an action, blazing upright from its alien seed-bed.

He is indifferent to the bright wind optimism of these October streets. He drives his antler into the clouds. Pulling away from the site that he has chosen for his last stand, away from the human debris that came to him with the bricks.

In Slade's acoustic chamber the hawk-nosed man of the west, launched on the Powers, lolls, staggers, his song of plaint, his nasal accusations, rise & shake the polished tiles, the thick brass pipes, the venereal plaques. A Kerry man whose song is a challenge, to the City & the Moment, a disembodied purity, as he pisses onto his cuffs, causing the old tweed to steam, onto his unlaced boots. Nothing drips from his slack member. Though it remains held out over the fresh water that rushes into the trough. A newspaper bulges in his overcoat pocket. His companion two stalls clear, is silent, dehydrated on a sour binge, all fires gone, in Angel exile, in No-Man's Islington.

Darkness of the Nebula closes about the dug-out; the urinal is wheeled out among the stars. The song of the old Republican spills thinly between the dust of comets; into the great trench of blackness, into the absence of warm animal light. The head is sucked across the floor, itches into numbers, into marked insects, scarabs, marble chips. Each with its sigil, each impulse has a value: a reason for existence, a motive, a reason for movement. The head of Slade still looks like a head, rings hollow, an elegant lattice of numbers in treaty, in alliance, re-entering the ionised dust cloud, mating with silica, iron, false carbon. The cloud thickens, all voices, all numbers, radial velocities, become the galactic motive, into the arms of the Nebula, bone embrace, stress factors. Slade's purpose served, what he thought

if consciousness
keeps the clouds afloat, the ribs – then the unconscious is forced down into the darkness where it is active: the unconscious is made out of darkness, the dust cloud is woven from the shape of Slade's head, forced wide, travelling beyond the west – there is no west – into that envelope, travelling plains of nothingness where the compass loses itself

speech

SLADE'S INVECTIVE

all life is star .
the shadow cannot of its own volition leave the ground
all energy is war .
opposites united, stitch the flux
the weapon discharges the need to reply
the head, cut, floats on its arteries
like a kite
watered in dust, the plant of bone .
life is evil, & its mirror

surface repels (hyper-space/emptied mind)
repulsion like attraction
speeds through the barrier

zones describe, & do not limit

the stars abandon the human strategy
like *Star Wars* operate in archetype

the stars foreclose

every nerve is star born
the dust comes out of our faces
reforming the marvellous
the child of galaxies
the old fire emotions writ large
Keats – holiness of the heart
is modular entrance
is shape of star, essence

the heat floats
cut free of its strings

alone endures,
without actors to clothe the word
gravities to contain the light
shapes where the light clusters
as it comes through glass
all light breaks to this pattern
as we reach across, blood erected into bone
as the skin dreams of folding
enclosing, about the coin
legs into cups
as the beasts rise up & walk like men
face to face, the thought crackles
blue beam for hero, blood jet power
clamped together in sickle

the hooded core strikes

the assembled fragments
join to illude a new world, globe
of spittle shot into a snake's eye

time is what we cut out of the reptile's belly

Slade faces them. His audience is not posterity, but the dead. In this alone – like Baudelaire. Not truth itself, the abstraction, but the truth of his own instinct brought out, set down. All that he was. Facing the raised half-circle, the expectant galleried masks, sterile planets lifting above the wooden tiers, the sawdust, the table. His peers, set-faced hierarchies of the dead, non-critical, without irony, returning his effort, untouched; but subtly altered. The ecstasy of silence, cunningly, denied.

'To make it worthwhile to destroy myself, there is not enough of myself there to do it with'